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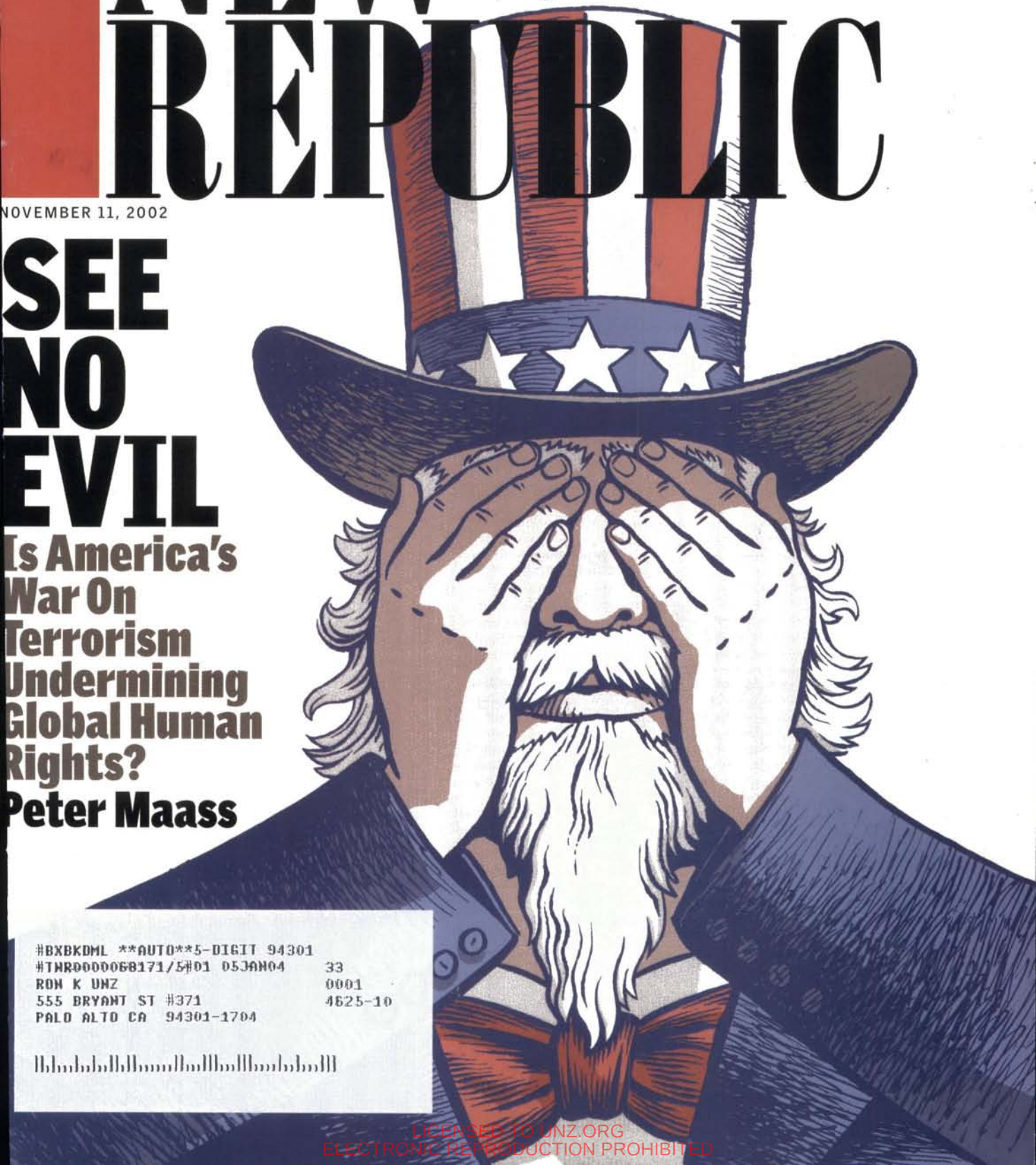
Peter Maass



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Iraq: The Critics, Then and Now

Robert Zelnick is a research fellow at the Hoover Institution and chairman of the Department of Journalism at Boston University.

Eleven years ago, forty-five Senate Democrats and two Republicans voted against granting President George H. W. Bush authority to wage war against Iraq. For months, as Iraq cemented its stranglehold on Kuwait, witnesses before Senator Sam Nunn's Armed Services Committee had urged caution. Engage Iraq's desert-bred, battle-tested army, and the United States would suffer twenty thousand casualties or more. The "Arab street" would froth over with anti-American vitriol. Israel would get drawn into the conflict, and the alliance would come apart. Better to let the embargo bring Saddam to his knees. Time rewards the patient.

Had that advice convinced four more senators—assuming the president decided to avert a constitutional crisis and comply—Iraq would today dominate the Persian Gulf. Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, and the other gulf states would be mere vassals; Kuwait, a wholly owned subsidiary. Iraq's arsenal would include nuclear weapons. The threat of a terrorist-inspired catastrophe dwarfing September 11 would be terribly real.

That the critics were wrong a decade ago does not automatically make them wrong today. But their arguments are hauntingly similar.

Those who demand proof that Saddam's threat is real would not see it if it bit them. Weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) have been central to Iraqi military doctrine since the mid-1970s. Saddam lied to UN inspectors about his nuclear, chemical, and biological programs and then kicked them out when their trail got hot. As the British Joint Intelligence Committee recently noted, hundreds of tons of chemical agents and thousands of tons of precursor chemicals were unaccounted for when the inspectors left in 1998. What did Saddam do with those materials, eat them?

The same critics, who see no imminent threat from Iraq's WMDs, purport to see a Stalingrad-type threat from its shrunken, suspect army. Now the Republican Guards have a new tactic, urban warfare: Street to street they will fight to save Saddam. Pure nonsense. Serbia and Afghanistan proved the lethality of the U.S. arsenal of precision weapons. Further, if the U.S. military has paid a fraction of the attention to information warfare its literature suggests, every Iraqi soldier will know before the battle begins that the only threat to his safety and that of his loved ones is Saddam Hussein. **Fight for him and die. Get rid of him and the war is over. My guess: Saddam will be out faster than a marine on liberty.**

We hear other arguments. Saddam need not be preempted; he can be deterred. Or we must not act without Security Council approval. As for deterrence, it might possibly work, assuming Saddam correctly (for once) interprets U.S. intentions, and assuming further he chooses not to deliver his WMDs through clandestine agents who may be hard to trace.

As for Security Council approval, it would be nice to have the Russians, Chinese, and French endorse U.S. action. Almost as nice as it will be to see democracy begin to transform the Arab world, as those who cherish freedom fervently hope.

— Robert Zelnick

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CORRESPONDENCE

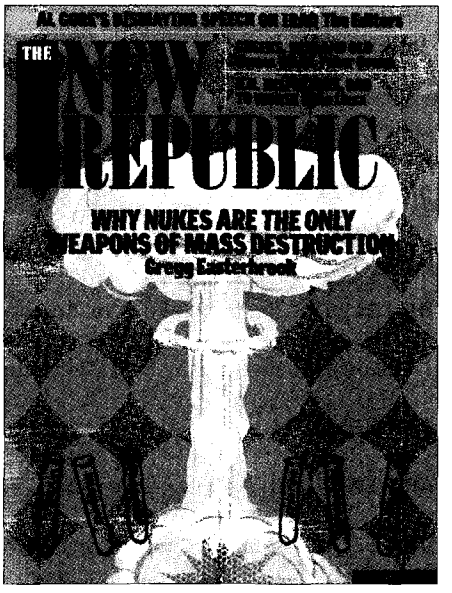
Scare tactics

TO THE EDITORS:
In his analysis of weapons of mass destruction, Gregg Easterbrook uses the wrong yardstick to measure their effectiveness as terrorist weapons ("Term Limits," October 7). While measuring the number of deaths is appropriate for military use, it fails for terrorist use, as the two do not have the same goals. The anthrax attack on Washington last year was ineffective as a weapon of war but very effective as a terrorist weapon—our post office was forced to change its mail-delivery services, inducing large delays and increased costs, and these delays in delivery severed people's communication with their elected representatives. Also, the low likelihood that one will be a victim does not deter fear, one of the main objectives of terrorists. Add to the above the fact that it is easier to smuggle in biological weapons material than nuclear weapons material, that terrorists will learn from minor successes how to achieve major ones, and that there are added incentives for Saddam Hussein to provide materials to terrorists thanks to recent congressional action, and you find that biological weapons become a much better terrorist weapon than nuclear weapons.

TOM VIRGILIO
Cross Plains, Wisconsin

Oil slick

TO THE EDITORS:
In his TRB column, Peter Beinart discredits the claim that the Bush administration has whipped up war fever because of Iraqi oil and concludes, therefore, that the administration is sincere about its goals ("Crude," October 7). But oil is hardly an exhaustive list of ulterior motives. Another possibility is that the White House wants to change the subject: (1) from Osama bin Laden, who the Bush administration said it would find but has not; (2) from Afghanistan, which is an endless and unsatisfying project; and (3) from the economy and other domestic issues that favor the Democrats on



November 5. What the Bush administration is sincere about is its determination to win elections.

FRANK N. EGERTON
Professor of History
University of Wisconsin-Parkside
Kenosha, Wisconsin

TO THE EDITORS:
Beinart's "Crude" makes some great points. I, too, highly doubt that George W. Bush and Dick Cheney are rubbing their hands together and drooling at the prospect of blood for oil in Iraq. However, while I'm not so cynical as to believe that the Bush administration would put oil before American lives, I'm not so naive as to think that oil has no bearing on U.S. foreign policy. It does not seem to have occurred to Beinart that while oil may not offer a justification for war, it does offer an incentive. Beinart points out that if Bush wanted to get the U.S. oil companies in on the action, a much cheaper way would be to drop the sanctions. However, this is politically impossible after September 11, 2001, and the administration is right to worry about oil money funding Saddam and his weapons of mass destruction. The only way to drop the sanctions now would be for Saddam to go. So while I agree that this is not a war for oil per se, the prospect of oil is an enticing one for the Bush administration and may be clouding its judgment on security issues.

STEPHEN SACCO
Savannah, Georgia

Sweet talk

TO THE EDITORS:
In San Francisco, Al Gore gave one of his two best speeches in the last two years—his presidential concession speech being the other ("Speechless," October 7). He is correct on all counts. We cannot unilaterally attack a sovereign country without losing the moral authority to lead the rest of the world. We cannot even proceed in the so-called "war on terror" without that moral authority. If the Bush administration hadn't already assured the rest of the planet of its real goal of acquisition in Iraq, a positive vote from the U.N. Security Council wouldn't be in doubt.

It's unfortunate to see that THE NEW REPUBLIC has joined the leadership of the Democratic Party in wishing Al Gore away. He's the only chance the Democrats have of unseating the current occupant of 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue and his unhinged crew. And with enemies like TNR, W. doesn't need friends.

FRED ARNOLD
Rocky Mount, North Carolina

TO THE EDITORS:
TNR's editorial on Gore's speech was right on the money. What is especially troubling to me about the Democrats is that they don't seem to stand for anything—that is, unless it is poll-driven and phony. But on Iraq, they appear not only to be bucking the polls but opposing war for the sake of opposing it. One does not have to agree with their positions, but let them stand up for something—stand up on their own and be counted as serious politicians.

J. H. COHEN, J.D., PH.D.
New York, New York

TO THE EDITORS:
Let me get this straight: Bush charts a reckless unilateralism contrary to political tradition and international law, desecrating every great and noble impulse generated in this country since the United Nations was formed at the end of World War II, and *Gore* is the one who "has an obligation to share his reasons for believing that war with Iraq will 'severely damage' the war on terrorism"? There are rules to the global game that American military might cannot abrogate. Gore's masterful speech charts a sensible course between idealism and cynicism that recognizes the need to fight terrorism without becoming a rogue state ourselves. In the unlikely event Gore is, as TNR's editors sloppily insinuate, bitter toward Bush, it probably has little to do with the latter's demonstrable illegiti-

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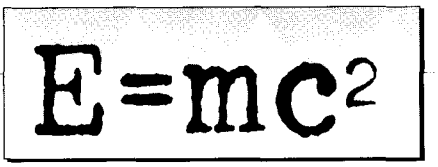

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TRB

FROM WASHINGTON

Age Gap

A GREAT DEAL has happened in the two years since America last went to the polls: a global war on terrorism, a pending war on Iraq, a meltdown on Wall Street, a huge tax cut, the proposed reorganization of large chunks of the federal bureaucracy, an ambitious new education bill, an overhauled system of campaign finance. But you would hardly know it on the campaign trail. Sure, Enron and WorldCom star in a thousand political ads. But in these waning days of the 2002 campaign, the biggest issue on the stump is the same one that dominated in 1982: Social Security. And the second biggest is the same one Al Gore and George W. Bush flogged in 2000: prescription drugs.

Are Americans so intellectually inert that their concerns haven't changed even as the world around them has turned upside down? No, it's just that most Americans don't vote in midterm elections; most *older* Americans do.

Every two years pundits fret about America's dismally low turnout rates. Yet, in a sense, the problem is that voting rates aren't *uniformly* low. If Americans of all age groups were equally disconnected from the political process, the small number of voters would at least reasonably approximate the population as a whole—and politicians would discuss a cross section of issues that appealed to people at different stages of life. But that isn't the case. In 1998, only 17 percent of Americans ages 18 to 24 went to the polls, compared with 59 percent of Americans 65 and older. Because the elderly vote at such massively disproportionate rates, politicians devote massively disproportionate attention to their issues. And when they return to Washington, those politicians massively redistribute wealth from young to old.

Most polls show that the public as a whole is far more concerned with the economy—in particular the availability of jobs—than with anything else. Education and health care (excluding prescription drugs) generally follow, along with Social Security and prescription drugs. Yet jobs are primarily an issue for Americans of working age. Education mostly concerns parents with children. And "health care" refers to problems with HMOs and the plight of the uninsured. So although more important to the population as a whole, these issues garner less campaign-trail attention than Social Security and prescription drugs, which mostly concern seniors.

The result is a vicious cycle, most acute in midterm elections, in which younger voters don't hear their concerns addressed and therefore don't vote, leading politicians to ignore their concerns even more. Since 1966, turnout among 21- to 34-year-olds is down roughly 40 percent. Among 35- to 44-year-olds, it's down 30 percent. But among 65- to 74-year-olds, it's up 8 percent. And among people 75 and older, it's up 25 percent. No wonder Republican congressional pollster Glen Bolger told Robin Toner of *The New York Times* this January that he asks every candidate the same question: "What is our message, and how are we going to communicate with seniors?"

Part of the problem is cultural. Older Americans—because they came of age at a time when politics seemed more vital—just care more about politics than younger people do. But there's another aspect to the problem that is a lot less abstract and a lot more amenable to governmental reform: Our election system makes it harder for younger people to vote. First of all, young people are more likely to be outside the country, particularly in the military. And as Florida showed in 2000, it's much harder than it should be to procure—and legally fill out—an overseas absentee ballot. Secondly, young people are more likely to be felons. In 36 states that means they temporarily lose their voting rights; in twelve states it means they lose them for good (even after they have served their time). Thirdly, young people are more mobile, and, since most states disallow voter registration in the weeks or months immediately before an election, that mobility often leaves them ineligible on Election Day. According to the Census Bureau, only 41 percent of Americans who had lived in their homes less than one month were registered in 1998, compared with 76 percent of those who had lived in their homes for more than five years. And lastly, young Americans are more likely to hold jobs or be in school. That makes it harder for them to get to the polls on Tuesdays, when the United States holds its elections.

In July 2001, a commission headed by former Presidents Jimmy Carter and Gerald Ford proposed doing something about this. The commission, created in the wake of the 2000 Florida debacle, proposed enfranchising felons who had served their time, simplifying overseas ballot procedures, and making Election Day a national holiday—perhaps by merging it with Veterans Day. President Bush, eager to be seen as reforming a broken system, said he supported the commission's recommendations in principle. In practice, however, he buried them. White House spokesman Ari Fleischer said the president would have to consult with veterans' groups before endorsing the Election Day merger. Predictably, they objected, and in a mindless bit of pandering, the House last December voted overwhelmingly to keep Veterans Day separate. Although there was an obvious alternative—holding elections on the weekend—the White House let the issue die. The Help America Vote Act—signed with much fanfare last week by President Bush—modestly improves procedures for overseas absentee balloting but otherwise ignores most of the Carter-Ford commission's proposals.

This fall California and Colorado will vote on the one valuable reform the Carter-Ford commission *didn't* propose: allowing people to register on Election Day. In the six states that allow same-day registration, 68 percent of the eligible population voted in the 2000 election, compared with 53 percent in the rest of the country. And same-day registration particularly benefits the mobile young. But conservatives generally oppose the reform, and liberals haven't made it a priority. What's more, the electorate that determines the proposal's fate will be disproportionately elderly. No wonder the referendum's prospects look dubious in Colorado and dismal in California.

In fact, one of the few voting reforms that states do seem interested in enacting—increased voting by mail—actually makes the generational imbalance worse. In Oregon and parts of Washington state, voters can *only* vote by mail; there are no polling places. Colorado is considering following suit. But it's not clear that mail-in voting increases turnout; some studies suggest that it simply makes voting easier for people who would have cast ballots anyway. And mail-in voting specifically benefits people who would have difficulty traveling to a voting booth—the elderly and infirm.

Politicians are fond of urging the young not to be so apathetic. But their admonitions would carry more weight if they addressed the structural barriers that feed that indifference. When a high-profile commission gives Congress and the White House an opportunity to do something about the problem and they refuse, you have to wonder whether political cynicism might not be limited to the slackers watching MTV.

PETER BEINART

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Be Prepared

IN TESTIMONY BEFORE a House-Senate panel two weeks ago, CIA Director George Tenet confided that Al Qaeda was "coming after us" and "planning to strike the homeland." Tenet's grim warning, which *The New York Times* called his "starkest" and "bluntest" yet, came only one week after the FBI and the Office of Homeland Security delivered a similar alert to more than 14,000 state and local law enforcement agencies about the likelihood of another strike within our borders.

Unfortunately, Tenet's warning will probably do little to improve America's homeland security. That's because America's homeland security rests largely in the hands of local and state governments—and Washington still isn't giving them the guidance and the resources they need to respond to the next attack. The first problem is the murkiness of Washington's warnings. As a result, when the Bush administration raised the terrorist threat index from "elevated" to "high" in September, fewer than one-fourth of local governments adjusted their emergency plans or tightened security around public facilities, and fewer than one-fifth issued alerts to their local communities, according to a survey by the National League of Cities.

Even more significant is that while military expenditures and the CIA's counterterrorism budget have increased dramatically, state and local governments have been largely left out in the cold. Earlier this year President Bush pledged $3.5 billion in emergency funding for "first responders"—the nation's roughly 850,000 firefighters, medical personnel, and law enforcement agents who would likely be the key players in a terrorism-related crisis. But the government has yet to shell out one cent. The First Responder Terrorism Preparedness Act, which would authorize the $3.5 billion, has languished in the Senate since June. The administration also recently withheld from cities and counties $2.5 billion in supplemental security funding that Congress approved this summer, and the government has yet to reimburse local law enforcement agents for securing America's 429 commercial airports at the behest of the Transportation Security Administration.

Partly because of the lack of federal support, state and local first-response capabilities remain riddled with deficiencies. In Los Angeles, firefighters are using radiation detectors from the 1950s, and their 911 service is in dire need of upgrade. In New York state, two-thirds of hospitals are in the red and many lack basic anti-terrorism equipment, such as protective suits and decontamination showers. The American Hospital Association estimates that the country's hospitals need at least $11 billion in federal assistance "to achieve minimum readiness for the casualties that could result from a nuclear, biological, or chemical attack." Speaking at the George Washington University Medical Center last week about the threat of a bioterror attack, Al Gore rightly called for a "national defense public health act to responsibly address this imminent threat."

Emergency communication systems are also woefully inadequate. Because agencies in separate jurisdictions—even within the same city—operate on different frequencies, they cannot effectively communicate during an emergency. At the World Trade Center, for example, police were told of dangers that the firefighters were not. In December, Representatives Jane Harman and Curt Weldon sponsored a bill that would create an interagency "public safety spectrum" for use during a crisis. But the TV broadcasting industry, which owns the needed channels, has been reluctant to vacate them. Also troubling is the FBI's and CIA's unwillingness to disseminate information beyond Washington and to allow local and state police access to federal terrorist watch lists.

Finally, civilian home and workplace preparation has yet to receive much attention. Should the public store water, food, prescription and patent medicines, tape for the windows, or gas masks? And what about evacuations? Should cities map out preferred exit routes in order to minimize the chaos that could accompany a mass exodus from Washington or New York? In Israel, which has dealt with the terrorist threat for years, every citizen has a gas mask. And unlike the United States, Israel boasts a strong Civil Guard, as well as an entire military command designated to deal with the civilian sector during a crisis. Of course, the analogy between the perils with which Israel lives and those which may now confront the United States is not perfect. But the U.S. government has barely even broached the question of what preparations, if any, individual Americans should make. The challenge of responding to the next terrorist attack will be largely local. Yet, so far, America's states, cities, and families lack the federal guidance and support they need. Which just makes Tenet's warning that much more frightening. ■

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NOTEBOOK

PAUL WELLSTONE, 1944-2002: In March 1977, The New Republic ran a short dispatch about a protracted labor dispute in North Carolina. The author noted the basic injustice of the situation (over 1,500 textile workers had voted to organize a union, but the company was refusing to negotiate) as well as its apparent hopelessness (the company, a notoriously successful union-buster, could drag out litigation for years). But the author suggested that the workers might ultimately prevail anyway because they were organizing a national boycott of the company's products and were determined to see the fight through. The author was Paul Wellstone, then a professor at Carleton College, and the article captured two of the qualities that made him such an asset to American politics in later years: his heartfelt commitment to the underdog and his eternal optimism that, with sufficiently energetic organizing, the underdog could win. As a two-term senator from Minnesota, Wellstone was a relentless champion of terribly unfashionable, yet terribly worthy, causes such as the progressive tax code and universal health insurance. And while Wellstone's path at times diverged sharply from this magazine's, he delivered his opinions with a candor wholly anachronistic in the modern U.S. Congress. Indeed, Wellstone's two most famous dissents—his vote against welfare reform in 1996 and his vote against war with Iraq this month—both took place on the eve of bitterly contested elections in which he seemed sharply at odds with prevailing public opinion. Yet after those votes, when others would tell Wellstone that he was being brave, he would shrug: What else could he do but speak his mind and hope that his constituents respected him for it? Minnesota voters validated that judgment once when they returned him to office in 1996 and seemed on the verge of doing so again when Wellstone's plane crashed last week, killing all aboard. The tragedy elicited mourning from across the political spectrum, as well it should have: Wellstone brought to the business of politics a seriousness of purpose, a stubborn inquisitiveness, and a sense of morality all too rare today. His presence will be missed far beyond the U.S. Senate chamber and long after his untimely passing.

GAY-BAITING, DEMOCRAT STYLE: Montana GOP Senate candidate Mike Taylor raised a stink several weeks ago over a Democratic attack ad concerning his mishandling of student loan money when he ran a beauty school in the 1990s. Taylor charged that the main purpose of the ad—which featured infomercial footage of him wearing an open-front shirt and massaging a male customer's face—was to make him look like a "gay hairdresser." Maybe. But there's no ambiguity about what South Carolina Democrats are trying to insinuate about the GOP Senate candidate in that state, Lindsey Graham. For years there have been whispers around the Palmetto State that the unmarried Graham is gay. And in this campaign Democrats have tried their subtle best to amplify them. First there was South Carolina Democratic Party Chairman Dick Harpootlian, who last year told reporters that Graham is "a little too light in the loafers to fill Strom Thurmond's shoes." (When Graham cried foul, Harpootlian played dumb and said he did not know the phrase had sexual overtones.) Now comes Graham's Democratic opponent, former College of Charleston President Alex Sanders. In the last debate between the two candidates this past weekend, Sanders oddly injected Rudy Giuliani into the race, blasting Graham for accepting the former New York City mayor's endorsement. "We all admire what he did during the nine-eleven crisis," Sanders said of Giuliani, "but he is an ultra-liberal." As evidence, Sanders cited Giuliani's support for gun control, abortion, and gay rights. A fair enough, if somewhat odd, set of charges for a Democrat to lob at a Republican. But then Sanders added, "His wife kicked him out, and he moved in with two gay men and a Shih Tzu. Is that South Carolina values? I don't think so." Does this tortured effort to gay-bait Graham represent Democratic Party values? We don't think so.

DUBIOUS COUNCIL: "How many Frenchmen does it take to hold Paris?" goes the old joke. "Nobody knows." A little nasty, perhaps, but it suggests the deeper issue underlying France's continued opposition (as of this writing) to a resolution threatening force if Iraq obstructs U.N. weapons inspectors: Why is France on the Security Council at all? Paris got its permanent membership (and thus its Security Council veto) as a reward for having helped defeat Nazi Germany. But while the French suffered under Nazism, it was the Americans, Russians, and British who defeated it. (Winston Churchill's envoy to France famously called Charles de Gaulle the heaviest cross he had to bear during World War II.) Another rationale holds that France owes its seat to its status as an independent nuclear power. But India now boasts that distinction as well, and—with its massive population, growing economy, and third-world democracy—it would be a far more compelling choice. In truth, France's fantasies of grandeur—fantasies that are decades, if not centuries, out of date—would be laughable, except that they are taken seriously in Turtle Bay. And so the Bush administration must endlessly negotiate with a country whose Iraq policy is motivated by petro-dollars and anti-American resentment, particularly the anti-American (and anti-Western) resentment of its Muslim immigrant masses. Why not stop the charade and let France veto the Iraq resolution? The United States and its allies could, on their own, eliminate the unconventional weapons of that most unconventional tyrant, Saddam Hussein. And, as a side benefit, the United Nations would suffer a humiliation so profound that it might force some long-overdue reconsideration of the Security Council's anachronistic composition. For international organizations to be relevant, privilege must follow power, and for them to be admirable, privilege must follow decency. Nothing would more dramatically further both goals than dethroning France.

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PUT THAT DOG ON A LEASH: Over the last few months something strange has happened to Dick Morris. The Great Triangulator, it seems, has morphed into a strident crusader. In seemingly every one of his recent *New York Post* columns and Fox News appearances, he's beaten the drum for war on Iraq. In August, for example, he wrote a *New York Post* op-ed arguing, "Men like Saddam come along very rarely. Just as it was a lot more important to get rid of the Taliban than it was to determine the future government in Afghanistan, it is a lot more important to oust Saddam than to specify who takes over after." It strains belief: Dick Morris, the crassest man in recent American political history, making a moral argument. Well, as it turns out, not really. In fact, the real reason Morris has such enthusiasm for a war with Iraq is that it offers President Bush an exceptional opportunity to wag the dog. In July, for example, Morris wrote, "Bush needs to act now to bring Iraq to the top of the nation's agenda, if only to displace corporate fraud as the issue that moves voters as they cast their ballots." Earlier this month he reiterated this unseemly argument in *The Hill*: "If Bush delivers a prime-time speech to the nation, simulcast on all the networks, making the case for an attack on Saddam Hussein, the Democrats' chances in November will decline even further." And this week Morris made the case yet again in *The New York Post*: "To salvage his chances of victory"—political, of course, not military—"Bush needs to stop campaigning, stop futzing with the U.N. and start to re-create a national sense of urgency about Iraq and terror in general." With advice like this polluting the opinion pages, it's no wonder many Democrats are skeptical of the administration's motivations for war.

IDIOCY WATCH, CONT'D: "One year after 9/11, we still don't know by whom we were struck that infamous Tuesday, or for what true purpose. ... Even so, we have been getting some answers to the question: why weren't we warned in advance of 9/11? Apparently, we were, repeatedly; for the better part of a year, we were told there would be unfriendly visitors to our skies some time in September 2001, but the government neither informed nor protected us. ... The behaviour of President George W. Bush on 11 September certainly gives rise to all sorts of not unnatural suspicions. ... Obviously, somebody had ordered the Air Force to make no move to intercept those hijackings. ... As it proved, the conquest of Afghanistan had nothing to do with Osama. He was simply a pretext for replacing the Taliban with a relatively stable government that would allow Union Oil of California to lay its pipeline for the profit of, among others, the Cheney-Bush junta."—Gore Vidal, *The Observer*, October 27

DEPARTMENT OF UNFORTUNATE TIMING: "BALI: STILL PARADISE?"—Cover story of the October 2002 issue of *National Geographic Traveler* (Thanks to Chris Shea.) ■

INSIDE THE BOX | Bruce Reed

ABOUT FACE
Bush now says Saddam can stay in power if he complies with U.N. resolutions. Regime change: It all depends on what the meaning of "was" is.

DON'T KISS, DON'T TELL

Karen Hughes set to ink multimillion-dollar deal for book on career with Bush. Proposed title: *Thinking for Two.*

CODE ROSY
Hart-Rudman panel says U.S. vulnerable to more terrorist attacks unless feds do more. Ridge's office dismisses report: "That's what you said last time!"

AMERICA'S MOST WANTED

Fox News asks to televise U.N. weapons inspections in Iraq. Why settle for Hans Blix when you can get Geraldo?

THE NATURAL

Redford plans sequel to 1972 campaign classic *The Candidate.* This time, he'll play an even bigger maverick: a good-looking senator who's *not* running for president.

BAD BOYS
Sean Penn buys full-page ad asking president not to go to war: "Take it from me—there's plenty of fighting to do here at home."

GUNS AND BUTTER
100,000 come to Washington for largest antiwar rally since the '60s. New White House spin: War is our only hope to save embattled tourist industry.

GETTING OLD
Both parties spend millions on Social Security campaign ads. Faster way to save Social Security: Let the trust fund accept soft money.

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Exploiting Paul Wellstone.

Memory Lapse

By Ryan Lizza

When Paul Wellstone's plane crashed in the Minnesota wilderness Friday morning, he was in the midst of the nastiest Senate race in the country. He had long been regarded as the most vulnerable Senate Democrat, and the president personally recruited his opponent, Norm Coleman. Every big special interest group in the United States was dumping money into the race on both sides. "You had a ferocious campaign here," says the University of Minnesota's Larry Jacobs. "This was like Ali-Frazier in the fifteenth round." And then, with Wellstone's death, the whole thing came to a screeching halt.

At least that's what both sides claimed. "We have suspended all campaign activities," Coleman said. Democrats promised the same. But the truth is, the campaigns never really stopped. Watching the parties joust in the days after Wellstone's death, one can only come to the grim conclusion that Republicans and Democrats have mastered the politics of dead candidates. Two years ago in Missouri, Republicans silently watched as the widow of Democratic candidate Mel Carnahan rode the electorate's emotions to victory over John Ashcroft. From that experience the parties learned that a prolonged mourning period boosts the candidate who champions the dead and prevents her opponent from campaigning at all. So this time around Democrats did two things: They sought to stretch out the period of grieving for Wellstone by delaying Walter Mondale's formal entry into the race; and they are now defining his campaign as an extension of that mourning process. Republicans, meanwhile, have tried to honor Wellstone, even as they claim that Mondale isn't the Wellstone stand-in he claims to be. The most dishonest part of this post-tragedy spectacle is that both parties insist that this sort of maneuvering ended with Wellstone's death.

In truth, Coleman's campaign never came close to shutting down. His first instinct was to try to capture some of Wellstone's posthumous glow by recasting their bitter campaign as a high-minded affair—as if he might, in a strange way, be considered Wellstone's true successor. "He made me a better candidate," Coleman said Sunday. But that's been a tough sell, given the brutality of the campaign before Wellstone died. Republicans, after all, had practically argued that Wellstone was fighting for Al Qaeda. One ad accused him of cutting "anti-terrorism funding" and money for the "B-2 used in Afghanistan." The commercial ended ominously: "[A]sk Wellstone, 'Who are you fighting for?'" When it became clear that Mondale would replace Wellstone, the GOP's effort to tie themselves to the dead liberal took an even stranger turn—they argued that Mondale couldn't be Wellstone's true successor because he was too conservative. Of course Coleman isn't responsible for Newt Gingrich's false accusation last Sunday that Mondale supports privatizing Social Security, but Republicans back in Minnesota echoed the tactic: As the state GOP chairman harrumphed this week, Mondale, far from reflecting Wellstone's legacy, "has served on the corporate boards of multinationals and pharmaceutical companies."

The GOP's overnight opposition research was only the beginning of its post-death politics. Two days after the crash, Republicans challenged the former vice president to a series of debates. They conducted and leaked two polls showing a close race. And Coleman quietly cut new campaign commercials. Senator Harry Reid spoke for furious Democrats when he complained, three days after the crash, that Republicans are "conducting polls while they're gathering the bodies out of the woods in Minnesota."

But whatever moral authority Democrats had as the grieving party soon evaporated. Sorrow gave way to perverse excitement that Wellstone's death could help accomplish their central goal, keeping control of the Senate. The day after the crash, Al Gore picked up the theme at a fund-raiser in Maine. Commenting on Bush's response to corporate fraud, Gore said, "I'm telling you it is a sham. If Paul Wellstone were here he'd say, 'Vote Democratic and stand up for the little guy.'" Campaigning for gubernatorial candidate Carl McCall in New York, Hillary Clinton argued, "I see a direct connection between our loss on Friday ... and this campaign that Carl is waging." In New Jersey, Democratic Senate candidate Frank Lautenberg went much further: "Out of respect for Paul Wellstone, all of the seats that are under contest right now have to go Democrat in order to protect the interests that he had." Democrats have even begun talking about the "Wellstone factor," an energizing of the party's liberal base that could help swing close Senate races in Minnesota, Iowa, South Dakota, and Missouri. In an Iowa appearance with Senator Tom Harkin, Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle spoke of a "new chemistry" in the electorate and said, "The spirit of Paul Wellstone lives on in Tom Harkin's heart." The audience cheered. (In truth, now a week before the election, polls offer scant evidence that the "new chemistry" is having much of an impact anywhere but in Minnesota. And there, the net effect may be that *both* parties have been equally energized.)

Republicans were certainly fired up by Tuesday night's tribute to Wellstone—broadcast live across the state—which turned into a fiercely partisan rally. The senator's longtime friend and campaign treasurer, Rick Kahn, made it clear that there was no distinction between honoring Wellstone and defeating Coleman. "We can redeem the sacrifice of his life if you help us win this election for Paul Wellstone," he thundered. Governor Jesse Ventura actually walked out, saying he "felt violated," and an ensuing backlash forced Democrats to apologize for the tone of the event.

But the lesson of Carnahan has been fully internalized: Democrats have learned that championing the cause of the dead is powerful; Republicans have learned how to coopt the dead candidate's legacy as well. Both sides agree it's worth exploiting a tragedy in order to win. ■

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Rwanda Dispatch

Ghost Story

By Lara Santoro

GACACA. THE WORD, when I first heard it, had a Spanish ring, like *corrida* or *castillo*—not to mention the promise of half a million redeemed dead, victims of the 1994 Rwandan genocide.

The idea of a nationwide gacaca (pronounced gachacha), literally a clearing in the middle of a Rwandan village where disputes are traditionally settled, had the symmetry of a mathematical equation: Take the perpetrators of the genocide, mostly males from Rwanda's Hutu majority; bring them back to their villages to face the surviving members of the Tutsi minority they tried to exterminate; use villagers and village elders as witnesses in these community-level gacaca hearings; and hope for reconciliation with the 130,000 mostly Hutu genocide suspects confessing their crimes. Those who confessed probably would be set free to perform community service in restitution; though those who actually planned the genocide would be judged by the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) in Tanzania. Only through this monumental act of catharsis could the Tutsi and Hutu learn to share their land again.

Despite an initial lack of support, the Rwandan government had no trouble finding international assistance for these community hearings. Many foreign observers viewed the process as Rwanda's only hope of reconciling the two ethnic groups The international community agreed to play a role, with the German government's humanitarian arm taking the lead in providing assistance. Some foreigners even thought gacaca could serve as a template for reconciliation in other strife-torn societies.

The reality, however, is not so inspiring. Rwanda's experiment in justice depends on Hutu suspects' willingness to tell the truth. But few of them accept responsibility for, or even fully comprehend, their past actions. At the same time, the Tutsi now in charge of Rwanda have provided the Hutu with few reasons to come clean, creating a highly authoritarian government that has revived the very stereotype of Tutsi despotism that initially fed the genocide.

The minority Tutsi controlled most of Rwanda's resources until 1959, when the Hutu came to power through a bloodless revolution. Over the next 35 years, the Tutsi were stereotyped as autocratic former slavedrivers conspiring to enslave the Hutu masses again. When the plane carrying Hutu President Juvenal Habyarimana was shot down in April 1994, Hutu extremists used the incident, combined with the threat of the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF)—the Tutsi rebel army that had invaded from neighboring Uganda in 1990—to incite illiterate Hutu masses to murder. The Tutsi were tracked down and killed in ditches and ravines, on the roads, in churches, schools, and hospitals. Barely one-third of Rwanda's Tutsi population survived. The massacre ended only after the RPF captured the capital of Kigali.

After gaining control of the country, the RPF responded to calls for justice from survivors by passing legislation aimed at using Rwanda's courts to prosecute the 1994 killers. But the courts simply could not keep up with the 130,000 incarcerated genocide suspects, and in late 1998 justice ministry officials started developing the idea of gacaca. Several international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), such as Penal Reform International (PRI), provided counseling for the nascent process, and from 1999 to April 2002—when the first gacaca hearings began—a system of 11,000 informal village courts was set up across the country. The Rwandan government talked up the process as the only means for reconciliation, and some Rwandans and foreign observers had high hopes.

But these hopes have not been realized. When I went to attend my first gacaca hearing in the outskirts of Kigali, I found no one there. "There is a wedding," a woman explained. When I tried in Gitarama, an area three hours southwest of Kigali, I again saw no one. "We are taking a break," a woman told me. In Kibuye, six hours west of Kigali, there was no gacaca either.

Absenteeism is rife in part because the majority of the Hutu have yet to accept responsibility for the horrific 1994 massacre or to understand the moral difference between war crimes and outright genocide. Many Hutu argue that the RPF killed at least 40,000 Hutu during their march on Kigali and an estimated 80,000 Hutu in neighboring Congo. In Mutete Kavumu, a village east of Kigali, one Hutu expressed contempt for the minute of silence that is supposed to precede each hearing, telling me, "I lost my brother, my father. That doesn't count?" Across Rwanda other Hutu echoed his sentiments, disputing the legitimacy of a process of justice that does not account for their dead. Even the head of one gacaca court was unable to explain to me the distinction between the RPF's killing and the Hutu genocide.

This distinction could be learned, but no one is doing the teaching. "The Hutu could recognize the difference," says PRI's Klaas de Jonge, an NGO worker based in Kigali who is widely considered an expert on gacaca. "They want recognition that they lost people, too. So you draw a list of the dead, both Tutsi and Hutu. You send one list to gacaca and the other to the prosecutor general," thereby avoiding an equivalency between genocide and war crimes.

Unfortunately, though they permitted the creation of gacaca, Kigali's Tutsi-led government is doing nothing to encourage its acceptance, which might increase inquiries into the RPF's 1994 war crimes. "This country is run by the same people" who were in the RPF in 1994, says one foreign human rights worker in Kigali.

Allowing the justice ministry to draw up two lists of dead,

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thus permitting the prosecution of Tutsi for war crimes, would only damage this legitimacy. Having claimed the moral high ground for eight years, the Kigali leadership, drawn largely from the RPF, has shown little interest in allowing its officers to recount the summary executions and other crimes their army committed during the 1994 invasion. The RPF has also shown hostility to the ICTR in Tanzania, which is investigating its war crimes. Some Tutsi worry that revisiting 1994 would anger the country's Hutu majority so much that they might topple the regime.

The government's increasing authoritarianism has made it even harder for gacaca, which depends on open confrontation, to succeed. Though the post-genocide leadership promised a pluralistic political system, no real opposition has been allowed to emerge. The government has incarcerated vocal dissidents, even jailing Pasteur Bizimungu—Rwanda's first post-genocide president and a respected national leader—after he attempted to form his own political party.

With the Tutsi leadership refusing to hold the RPF accountable and the Hutu majority exploiting this refusal by boycotting gacaca, many Rwandans fear the country's process of reconciliation has reached an impasse. But few donors seem to notice: None have entertained the thought of suspending their programs in Rwanda, and Kigali continues to attract legions of aid workers. Though these foreigners face somewhat less repression—they have become nearly as paranoid as Rwandans, none except de Jonge agreed to talk to me on the record—their fear has not resulted in their employers' rethinking their Rwanda assistance.

So the gacaca process goes on, nearly starved of meaning. One day I drove to see a gacaca at Mutete Kavumu, east of Kigali, once again expecting to find no one. To my astonishment, I found three people sitting on a balding patch of grass. At nine a.m.—official gacaca starting time—two more heads came bobbing up one side of the hill. At ten a.m., I counted 20 people, and I heard someone crack a joke. It wasn't comic relief from a tense situation but a sign of indifference—although they had shown up, no one there had invested much in the gacaca process.

Then Clementine Mukamana arrived, one of four or five Tutsi present. She kept away from the crowd. When asked, she ticked off her dead slowly on her fingertips: her mother, her husband, her only child, two brothers, two sisters—40 people in total.

The gacaca finally started, but the people of Mutete Kavumu were weeks away from judging prisoners. They were still writing down the names of victims, separating them in three categories: Tutsi born in Mutete who had been killed in Mutete, Tutsi born in Mutete but killed elsewhere, and Tutsi born elsewhere but killed in Mutete.

When the time came to name Tutsi born in Mutete but killed elsewhere, Clementine stood up. "I know someone who was killed," she whispered. "Name?" asked the hearing's president. "I don't know," she replied. There was a savage burst of laughter from the crowd. A voice called out, "If you haven't got a name, what are you doing here?" "I don't know the name because he had not been named yet," Clementine said, her voice shaking. "He was just a baby." The same voice yelled, "Go away then. Come back with the name."

And Clementine Mukamana walked away. ■

Can the GOP convince blacks not to vote?

Soft Sell

By John B. Judis

"We've never seen in our lifetime an effort to attract the black vote by Republicans like we're seeing now," Former Kansas City Mayor Emanuel Cleaver told *The Kansas City Star* last month. In Missouri, Republican Senate candidate Jim Talent is making the rounds of black business groups, while black radio stations are inundated by Republican ads calling on blacks to "break the habit" of voting Democratic. In Arkansas, Republican ads are running on black radio as well. Speaking in August at a barbecue organized by the Jefferson County Minority Business Owners Association, Republican Senator Tim Hutchinson confessed, "When I read the history of the civil rights movement, our party wasn't doing what we should have been doing. I ask for your forgiveness."

The Republicans' new approach certainly seems like a welcome change from the days when conservatives like Jesse Helms spurned black voters and their causes in order to curry favor with working-class whites. By identifying Republicans as the "white party," they helped to revive Republican fortunes in the Deep South and in border states. But they also increased racial polarization and even hatred. Now, with electoral support waning for overt political racism, it seems the Republicans have at last bid goodbye to that sordid legacy.

Except they haven't really. For the most part, Republicans this election cycle aren't trying to woo black voters by offering their own solutions to issues such as poverty or civil rights. Rather, they're trying to convince them not to vote at all by sowing cynicism about white Democrats, even implying they are racist. This "depress the vote" strategy becomes even clearer when viewed in conjunction with the GOP's ongoing efforts to subtly intimidate black voters with dubious charges of election fraud. When it comes to race, the GOP hasn't changed nearly as much as it would have you believe.

The best place to see the new Republican strategy in action is in Missouri. In the 1980s, Missouri Republicans saw their party displace the Democrats as the dominant party. By 1988, Republicans held both Senate seats and every major

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state office except lieutenant governor. But in the 1990s, Democrats began to chip away at the GOP's advantage as some Reagan Democrats, disillusioned with Republican economics, returned to the fold and as upscale suburbanites became uncomfortable with the Republicans' reputation for intolerance. While Bush carried the state narrowly in 2000, Republican Senator John Ashcroft was defeated by the late Mel Carnahan, and Talent lost the governorship by 21,000 votes to Democrat Bob Holden.

One key to the Democrats' success was the overwhelming support of black voters, who make up 51 percent of St. Louis, 19 percent of surrounding St. Louis County, and 32 percent of Kansas City. Carnahan and Holden piled up big enough margins in these areas to offset GOP advantages in the rest of the state. To win state office, Republicans realized they had to loosen black voters' commitment to the Democrats without eroding Republican support among the rural and small-town white voters who had migrated to the GOP.

To accomplish that, Talent has played politics with mirrors. Talent has downplayed his own deeply held conservative convictions on such subjects as privatizing Social Security, eliminating welfare for single mothers, and abolishing the Department of Education. Instead, he has trumpeted his support for urban redevelopment through tax cuts, and he has brought in black Republicans—Secretary of Education Rod Paige and retiring Representative J.C. Watts—to campaign for him while saying little that could disturb or engage black voters. The idea is not so much to win votes but to deprive the opposition of a bogeyman against whom they can turn out the vote.

And while Talent and Missouri Republicans have been trying to persuade black voters that they are not such bad fellows, they've made a ferocious effort to persuade them that the Democrats are. In one radio ad aired on black stations, a grandmother warns her school-age granddaughter, "Baby, there are some real ugly Democrats that have hurt black people and not helped us at all. We have to be smart and make decisions based on what is really right. Not just 'cause somebody told us we owe them our vote." In another ad, aired repeatedly on St. Louis stations, an announcer lists a series of indignities that white Democrats have visited upon blacks:

> Did you know that it was a Democratic county executive and prosecutor that said it was OK to shoot down two unarmed black suspects? ... Did you know that under the leadership of Democratic Mayor Francis Slay, the most prominent black ward in the city of St. Louis was eliminated? Did you know that to secure his chances of being reelected, Congressman Dick Gephardt took black voters away from Congressman Lacy Clay? ... Break the habit. Think the vote.

The ad isn't just ugly; it's dishonest. It refers to a decision by state and federal authorities not to prosecute two detectives who shot and killed two men whom they were trying to arrest on drug charges. It doesn't mention that the decision was made by local Democratic officials and the Bush administration Justice Department. The ad also misrepresents the redistricting fights in greater St. Louis, failing to note that they pitted black officeholders against one another as well as against white officeholders and that the fights were finally resolved to the satisfaction of everyone except for a single maverick alderwoman. In fact, Gephardt, while giving himself a more Democratic constituency, took no significant votes from Clay. As a result, both men face only nominal opponents this November.

Such ads don't suggest what Republicans would do if they replaced Democrats in office. Instead, they try to sow doubt among blacks about the sincerity and goodwill of white Democrats. Their primary purpose is not to win support for Republicans but to lose it for Democrats. As an anonymous leaflet placed on the cars of NAACP members at an October 4 meeting in Pine Bluff, Arkansas, put it, "Send Mark Pryor a strong message by casting your vote for Senator Tim Hutchinson *or just not voting in that particular race* [emphasis added]." Says St. Louis University political scientist Ken Warren, "The whole idea is to alienate blacks from their Democratic base so that they don't turn out and vote."

And as the leaflet suggests, it's not just Missouri: GOP Groups are running similar ad campaigns in other states and districts where black voters could determine close contests. The Kansas-based Council for a Better Government is spending $1.5 million to produce and air radio commercials in Arkansas, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Carolina, and North Dakota. The ads are supposed to air 21,000 times by November 5. Like the Missouri Republican Party ads, they insinuate that blacks are being manipulated by evil white Democrats. One ad about vouchers says, "I got one question for these white Democrats. What's wrong with black parents choosing schools for black children? Do you have a problem with that?" Another suggests that black soldiers were singled out for mistreatment during the Clinton years. "Under the Democratic administration of Bill Clinton and Al Gore," the narrator says, "African American soldiers helped keep the peace in five continents, but their readiness declined through neglect, and their morale declined through disrespect."

GOPAC, the organization made famous by Newt Gingrich and currently chaired by Oklahoma Governor Frank Keating, has launched its own ad campaign directed at minority voters. Its first radio ads aired in Missouri and in the neighboring Kansas congressional district where conservative Republican Adam Taff is challenging incumbent Democrat Dennis Moore. One ad about Social Security accused white Democrats of using the system to take money away from black Americans. "You've heard about reparations. You know, where whites compensate blacks for enslaving us?" the ad began. "Well, guess what we've got now? Reverse reparations. Under Social Security today, blacks receive twenty-one thousand dollars less in retirement benefits than whites of similar income and marital status. ... One-third of the brothers die before retirement and receive nothing. ... So the next time some Democrat says he won't touch Social Security, ask why he thinks blacks owe reparations to whites."

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According to *The Kansas City Star*, Talent paid for the ad's time slot, but it provoked such an outcry that his campaign repudiated it and GOPAC disowned it, blaming it on the media group that produced it. The ad is a gross distortion: Black Americans actually get a better rate of return on Social Security than whites and do considerably better on disability and survivor benefits. But more noteworthy than the ads' distortions is their explicit effort to inflame blacks against whites. We've seen this kind of twisted racial appeal before from black nationalists like Louis Farrakhan (and, at their worst, from Democrats) but not from white Republicans.

THE SECOND PRONG of this year's GOP efforts to suppress the minority vote has been widespread allegations of voter fraud in minority communities. Such efforts go back decades. In 1986, the Republican National Committee (RNC) devised a "ballot security program" that was used in Louisiana, Indiana, and Missouri. It was designed, in the words of an RNC memo, to "keep the black vote down considerably."

This year GOP officials in Missouri have accused Clay, the state's most prominent black Democrat, and other St. Louis Democrats of stealing the 2000 Senate and gubernatorial elections. Republicans point to the Democrats' success in convincing Circuit Judge Evelyn Baker to keep the polls open past 7 p.m. on Election Day to accommodate those still standing outside St. Louis polling places waiting to vote. The polling places had been clogged by disputes over the qualifications of voters who had been unaccountably removed from the registration lists. An appeals court panel subsequently overturned Baker's order, but Missouri Republican Senator Christopher Bond declared two days later that the "evidence points to a major criminal enterprise" by the Democrats. Bond rejected the idea that any voters had been prevented from voting. "Can you believe that anybody would say that a Democratic election board, appointed by a Democratic governor in a Democratic city dominated by Democrats, was trying to keep Democrats from voting?" he asked. Since then, according to *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* reporter Jo Mannies, Missouri Republicans have "savaged" Clay's reputation over the fraud allegations.

St. Louis has had instances of voter fraud before, and what exactly happened on Election Night remains shrouded in controversy. What has been established, however, doesn't point to a Democratic conspiracy. Baker was a Republican appointee, and the Democrats on the city's election board *protested* her decision to keep the polls open. "I think Sen. Bond needs to get a grip," Baker told the *Riverfront Times* after hearing his charges. Meanwhile, Clay's central contention—that several hundred registered voters were being prevented from voting by faulty lists—has been borne out. This August the Bush Justice Department agreed with Clay and the Democrats that "the Board of Elections improperly removed voters from the registration rolls by placing voters on inactive status without notice and then failing to maintain procedures on Election Day adequate to ensure that those voters could reactivate their registration status and vote without undue delay."

The Justice Department decision quieted discussion of the 2000 election, but Missouri Republicans have now begun to raise the specter of voter fraud in the coming election. They even attempted to create another logjam at the St. Louis polls in November. While a new Missouri law says that voters whose eligibility cannot "immediately" be established should be able to cast provisional ballots subject to later verification, Missouri Republican Secretary of State Matt Blunt announced in October that if voters' names were not on the rolls, election judges would have to attempt to verify their registrations *before* they could cast provisional ballots. That was exactly what had caused the long lines in 2000. Facing a suit from Missouri Democrats, Blunt compromised, but Bond has continued to warn of imminent fraud. Last week he declared, "I get that funny smell sometimes around election time in St. Louis, and . . . I'm getting a whiff of that smell."

Republicans outside Missouri have also been using allegations of fraud to intimidate potential minority voters. In Arkansas, where there are hotly contested Senate, gubernatorial, and House races, Republicans have already begun charging fraud. In Jefferson County—which is 40 percent black and in the middle of Democrat Mike Ross's district—a group of predominately black voters, who went to the county courthouse to cast their early ballots on October 21, were confronted by Republican poll watchers (including, reportedly, two Hutchinson staffers) who photographed them and demanded that they show identification—even though Arkansas law stipulates that poll watchers cannot ask voters to show identification. According to a witness cited by the *Pine Bluff Commercial*, several voters became frustrated and left. When Arkansas Democrats complained, Arkansas Republican Party Chairman Marty Ryall upped the ante, suggesting that Democrats were engaged in a "nationwide effort to steal elections and steal the Senate."

Likewise, in Georgia, Republican officials have announced a "fair elections task force" to monitor the polls in November. In South Dakota, Republican officials, citing several instances of forged registrations from Native Americans, have called on Attorney General Ashcroft to send federal election monitors to the state. And in Hidalgo County, Texas, Republicans are already crying fraud. In that county, heavily populated by Hispanics, Democratic gubernatorial candidate Tony Sanchez has been actively registering voters. In the first three days of early voting, 4,969 people cast ballots compared to 1,705 in the last gubernatorial election. On October 23, Hidalgo County Republican Party Chairman Hollis Rutledge warned that the election system was "primed for fraud" and claimed that an organization called VoterViews found 16,000 dead or unqualified people on the Hidalgo voter rolls. Texas's Republican Secretary of State Gwyn Shea, however, said she had never heard of VoterViews and had not seen their report. (VoterViews is located at the Austin address of a precinct chairman of the Travis County Republican Party. I sent him an e-mail requesting a copy of the study but did not hear back from him.)

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To be sure, voter fraud still exists in poor areas. But as the 2000 election showed, ensuring the right to vote is a much greater problem, particularly among low-income minorities in places like Jacksonville, Florida—where in November 2000, nearly 5,000 ballots in predominately African American communities were tossed out because of a flawed ballot. David Bositis, an expert in voting rights with the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies in Washington, sees the Republicans' strategy this year as simply a continuation of the Reagan-era efforts to hold down the minority vote. "Their agenda has always been to make voting more difficult, because they realize the higher the turnout, the more likely the turnout won't be their kind of guys."

In short, it's not yet time to celebrate the end of Republican racial politics. Conservative Republicans may be paying more attention to black voters than in the past—and they may be smiling as they speak—but when this mask of warm-hearted concern is drawn aside, the GOP's strategy is still aimed less at creating diverse black political participation than at trying to persuade black Americans to participate as little as possible. Let's hope it fails. ■

On The Hill

Inside Job

By MICHAEL CROWLEY

AS CONGRESS TOOK up the question of Iraq this fall, Democrats found themselves divided over what their party's position should be. But most agreed on at least one thing: It was best to get the war debate over with quickly and return to domestic issues before the November election. Well aware that a tough resolution was sure to pass easily, even an impassioned dove like the late Paul Wellstone aired his doubts with relative brevity and restraint.

But one Democrat wanted no part of this plan: West Virginia Senator Robert C. Byrd. Throughout the Iraq debate, the dapper, white-haired 84-year-old was a constant presence on the Senate floor, arguing against the Iraq resolution for hours at a time. In his opening statement on the issue—a grandiose rhetorical libretto of the sort for which he is famous—Byrd raged at a White House whose "newly bellicose mood is clearly motivated by campaign politics" and a resolution that he called "a blank check," "a cynical twisting of words," and "breathtaking—*breathtaking*—in its scope." But Byrd was even harsher on his fellow Democrats. "Fie upon some of the so-called leaders of the Congress!" he shouted. The next day he added, "We have rubber spines, rubber legs, and we do not have backbones." Three days after that he asked, "I wonder what has gotten into our Democratic leaders that they would embrace this kind of thing?" And in case it wasn't abundantly clear, Byrd made explicit his intention to prevent a quick vote. "We make a huge mistake in deciding this issue in an effort to 'get it behind us,'" he complained on October 3. "Slow down. Think. Ask questions. Debate."

To Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle, who was desperate to change the subject from Iraq back to domestic issues, Byrd may as well have been dragging his nails across a chalkboard. The Iraq debate epitomized the West Virginian's increasingly fraught relationship with his Democratic colleagues. Although you won't often see him on "Hardball" or "Meet the Press," as chairman of the mighty Senate Appropriations Committee and a master of the Senate's Byzantine parliamentary rules, Byrd is widely acknowledged to be one of the most powerful men in Washington. That power is enhanced by the fact that, as an incumbent of 50 years who can behold a bronze statue of himself in the West Virginia state capitol, he is able to do and say as he pleases without fear of losing his Senate seat. As a result, one Senate leadership aide says, "He sometimes is the purest voice of the party's core principles." That purity has always had a tendency to veer off into shrillness and self-importance, but lately it has caused more and more headaches for the party—undermining Daschle's leadership, delaying politically sensitive legislation, and generally making the Democratic Senate look as though it's in disarray. Daschle ultimately succeeded in getting the Iraq resolution passed—but not before Byrd had spent days publicly excoriating his colleagues. Just a couple of months earlier Byrd managed to hold up passage of the Homeland Security Act—contributing to a delay that the GOP has been using to bludgeon Democratic senators in this fall's elections. And no one on Daschle's side of the aisle is much looking forward to the outsized role that Byrd, as Appropriations chair, will likely play when the Senate debates the budget later this year or early in 2003. As a senior senate GOP aide puts it gleefully, "Senator Byrd is a gift."

IT'S NOT HARD to appreciate Robert Byrd's peculiar charms. He is, more than anything, a man out of time, a "Twilight Zone" character bringing an erudite, nineteenth-century sensibility to a crass, information-age Senate. Born in 1917, Byrd is thoroughly anti-modern. He is a self-trained classical scholar who quotes Cicero where other politicians would opt for a sports metaphor. For decades he played the fiddle, until the now-constant trembling of his hands—sometimes so pronounced that he can hardly sip a glass of water or put on his eyeglasses—forced him to stop. Although his profession is now completely defined by television, Byrd despises what he calls "this crazy boob-tube in the home. I don't listen to it a great deal." He claims to have attended only one movie during his half-century in Washington (something with Yul Brynner, he says, "and I did not stay through that one"). Byrd openly disdains the state of modern politics; he complains about his colleagues' obsession with fund-raising, their poor grasp of history, and the shallowness of modern political debate. In 1995, he groused about the "mindless gabble and rhetorical putridities" of Congress. Partly in response, no doubt, Byrd has appointed himself guardian of the Senate's

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prerogatives and of the integrity of the Constitution. Byrd wrote a four-volume history of the Senate, which he humbly refers to as "the anchor of the Republic." And when he (rightly or wrongly) perceives a threat to the Constitution—as he did during the Iraq debate and during past battles over a presidential line-item veto and a balanced-budget amendment—Byrd digs in like the last Japanese platoon at Iwo Jima.

Unfortunately, Byrd apparently fails to grasp how much he has devalued his erudition through self-parodying excess. He once began a press conference, for instance, by spending several minutes listing every signer of the Constitution. When discussing a topic as mundane as tax cuts, Byrd is apt to quote the words of the dying Voltaire, as he did in one recent interview with *Roll Call*. He opened his concluding speech in the Iraq debate with a quotation from the eleventh-century Persian poet Omar Khayyam—before going on to cite the Book of Luke, Alexander Hamilton, Charles I of England, the apostle Paul, and Demosthenes. A Senate aide says that Byrd recently complained to another senator who had crossed him, "You forsook me."

This clanging hauteur is consistent with Byrd's grandiose view of himself. In his Senate office, he works at a desk under an enormous portrait of himself. His website includes a first-person biography detailing "my upward trajectory" through politics and a page of quotes from senior senators calling him things like "a legend in his own time" and "a man of great historical knowledge." There are more than two dozen federal projects in West Virginia, built with money procured by Byrd, to which his name is affixed.

And woe to the fellow senator who crosses him. As Appropriations chairman, Byrd has final say over which of his colleagues' pet projects will be tucked into annual spending bills. And thanks to his mastery of Senate rules—and his willingness to speak for hours on the floor—Byrd can usually find a way to bring a colleague's bill to a grinding halt. Once, when the late Republican Senator John Chafee momentarily objected to Byrd's request for additional speaking time on the Senate floor, Byrd pointedly thanked him for the recent funding request Chafee had sent to the Appropriations Committee. Chafee quickly sat down. When then–Energy Secretary Bill Richardson skipped a hearing to which Byrd had summoned him in June of 2000, Byrd declared that Richardson would "never again receive the support of the Senate of the United States for an appointive position." Senate lore even holds that Byrd once taped the roll-call vote of a bill affecting West Virginia coal mining to the door of his Senate office as a many-times-a-day reminder of who was with him and who was not.

This vindictiveness understandably leads other senators to make pilgrimages to Byrd's office to kiss his ring. When Hillary Clinton was finding her place in the Senate early last year, for example, she made an exaggerated show of seeking out Byrd as a mentor—visiting him at his office and openly praising his wisdom. ("She played Byrd masterfully," a Clinton adviser told *The Washington Post*. "If she had gotten on the wrong side of him, she would have spent years getting

DARREN THOMPSON

right.") After Byrd's beloved dog, Billy, died last year, New York Senator Charles Schumer planned to offer Byrd his sympathies. But Schumer had forgotten the dog's name, and when he asked Ted Kennedy, the Massachusetts senator mischievously replied, "Fido." Schumer made it halfway over to Byrd before realizing with horror that he'd been set up and returned to chide a giggling Kennedy. "It goes to the issue of how much reverence people have for the Appropriations chairman," chuckles a former senior Senate Democratic aide.

Even one of Byrd's primary institutional foes has little option but to suck up to him. Ever since George W. Bush took office, Byrd has battled with White House Budget Director Mitch Daniels over federal spending—and has shown a real personal disdain for Daniels. Byrd singled out Daniels by name on the Senate floor last summer, complaining that he is "always meddling, always meddling in the Congress ... always lecturing the Congress.... I'm fed up to my ears." In a strained Shakespeare reference, Byrd even referred to Daniels as a "little Caesar"—a line some White House officials interpreted as a cheap personal shot at Daniels's height. But given an opportunity to return the favor, Daniels is positively deferential: "To me, he's a very amazing person," Daniels gushes. "I think I wound up on the wrong side of him and [still] found our encounters without exception memorable and fun."

Perhaps because he is treated with such elaborate deference, Byrd does not show the same kind of restraint as many of his colleagues. Early last year, for instance, Byrd gave a bizarre interview to Fox News in which he mused about the

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existence of "white niggers." Coming from a man who has never quite lived down his brief membership in the Ku Klux Klan, it was an inexplicably dumb statement. At a committee hearing earlier this year Byrd engaged in a strange duel with Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill, in which the two men argued about who had grown up poorer. "I lived in a house without electricity.... No running water, no telephone, little wooden outhouse," Byrd huffed.

But the problem for Democrats is not that Byrd often makes himself look bad. It's that he often makes the party look bad. After all, no Republican trashes the Democrats as effectively as Byrd. Less than one month after the September 11 attacks, for instance, Byrd was ridiculing the "paucity of debate" over Congress's resolution to allow the use of force against terrorism, and he said the attacks had "put a zipper on [Senators'] lips"—making his colleagues look like a bunch of ineffectual wimps. Last winter Byrd led a budget showdown with the White House in which he insisted on adding billions of dollars in extra homeland security spending to a defense appropriations bill. Byrd's substantive position—that the White House was shortchanging critical priorities like bioterrorism and port security—was actually quite reasonable. But Daschle was understandably loath to appear to be holding up a defense spending bill in the middle of war in Afghanistan. And Byrd did an ineffectual job of explaining his crusade, allowing the White House to disingenuously ridicule his effort as just another pork feast from Chairman Byrd. Unable to get Byrd to back down, Daschle was subjected to embarrassing questions about whether he could control the West Virginian, and Republicans snickered that Byrd was really in charge. A fed-up Daschle finally brokered a solution with Republican leader Trent Lott—without consulting Byrd. (Byrd was so angry that he wouldn't allow his staff to help write the compromise, and Daschle aides had to enlist Republican committee staffers.)

So far, this year has brought more of the same. This spring, as Democrats toed the White House line on the war on terrorism, Byrd broke off with some freelance criticisms at a committee hearing. ("If we expect to kill every terrorist in the world, that's going to keep us going beyond doomsday," Byrd complained. "How long can we afford this?") When reporters asked Daschle about those words the next day, the majority leader tepidly echoed them—and was hammered for days in the media.

Then came the first of this year's two major Robert Byrd shows so far: the debate over a new Homeland Security Department. As with the war on Iraq, Democrats had their reservations about the Bush administration's approach, but most felt it best that the party support him in Congress. Indeed, Bush's plan was essentially ripped off from one crafted by Joe Lieberman, and Democrats saw a chance to earn some credit on the issue. But Byrd hated the idea of the new department; he thought Congress was acting in haste and especially disliked the idea that it might be ceding some of its powers to the executive branch. So Byrd took it upon himself to stall the bill for as long as possible and spent hours on the floor, effectively filibustering the measure and ensuring it would not pass before the September 11 deadline many in Congress had hoped to meet. Even after the recess Byrd continued his crusade, which included an afternoon in which he spoke for more than three hours to forestall an amendment with which he did not agree. By afternoon's end, Democratic Whip Harry Reid finally had to plead with Byrd to shut up so he could go home for his wedding anniversary. (Reid said he dared not interrupt but that he was "considering waving a white flag.") Byrd responded by ruminating at length on the word "whip," former Senate leader Mike Mansfield, and Richard Nixon's bombing of Cambodia before finally relenting when Reid promised that he would be the first senator recognized to speak the next morning.

Byrd's ridicule of the Homeland Security plan made supportive Democrats like Lieberman look foolish. More important, his delay of the legislation chewed up precious time Daschle could have devoted to other popular Democratic measures, like a minimum-wage hike. And by delaying a vote until after the August recess, Byrd may well have contributed to its downfall. The nearer Election Day grew, the harder it became for Democrats to offend their labor allies on the key sticking point of union protections. Now the bill's stall-out has become a favorite GOP campaign theme.

Then there was the Iraq debate. It was Byrd's intention to drag the debate into another painful week, meaning Democrats would have lost several of the precious days they had left before the election to talk about their core domestic issues. On the day of the vote Byrd informed his colleagues that he had found an opening that would allow him to filibuster the Iraq resolution *three* separate times: once for the original White House resolution; once for the compromise text that had been amended to it; and, most inventively, once for the preamble—the list of flowery "whereases" which, under Senate rules, required a vote of their own. Byrd was ready for a fight against his own leadership, a point he made by warning that he could fight "until the flesh from my bones be hacked." Many of Byrd's fellow Democrats were appalled. "He was playing perfectly into the Republican plan," says one senior party official.

But Daschle had finally had enough. The Senate leader vowed a vote would come that night. "For every conversation I have with a senator who would like more time," he said, "I have three conversations with senators who would like to be out of Washington." Daschle then beat Byrd at his own game, employing the parliamentary trick of revising the resolution so that the preamble was inserted into the main text. Byrd had lost his foothold. But even as he conceded defeat, Byrd made a point of warning fellow Democrats that, had he wanted, he could have kept on fighting. "But don't you think for a moment I can't stand on this floor all the rest of this night," Byrd promised, listing the havoc he could have wreaked. "For example, the title of the resolution could be amended," he said with a sinister grin. "Ha. How about *that*?" But, he concluded, there is a "time to accept reality." Democrats can only hope Byrd will apply that lesson with greater frequency in the future. ■

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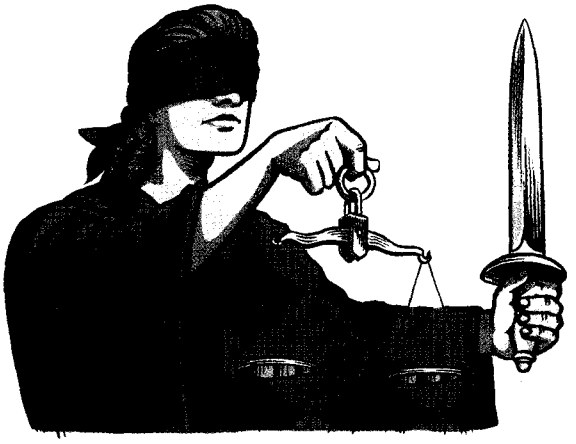
How America's friends really fight terrorism.

Dirty War

By PETER MAASS

IF YOU HAPPEN to believe the only good terrorist is a dead terrorist, you are quite possibly a member of the U.S. government. I realized this while visiting the home of a U.S. official in Pakistan one Sunday afternoon. Security guards are always stationed outside his residence. When he ventures beyond his front door he does so in an armored car, with bodyguards at his side, and another vehicle follows his—lest he end up like Laurence Foley, the American diplomat who was killed outside his home in Amman, Jordan, on October 28.

We drank coffee and nibbled biscuits in his living room and chatted about the best place to buy handwoven carpets, which are plentiful in Pakistan, at prices that coincide with the sum the salesman believes he can extract from your American wallet. Our conversation then moved to the crackdown on religious extremists by Pakistan's military leader, General Pervez Musharraf. I assumed the official wanted every actual or potential terrorist thrown in jail. He shook his head; I didn't get it at all.



"We don't want them arrested," the official said. "We want them e—."

He interrupted himself. He was reconsidering his choice of words.

"Were you going to say, 'exterminated'?" I asked.

He smiled uncomfortably.

"No. I was going to say, 'eliminated.'"

I cannot disclose his name or the city where we met, but I can add one detail about my host: He was telling the truth. It is impolitic for U.S. officials to give their blessing on the record to regimes that skip judicial niceties and go directly to the gallows, but that is the reality of America's war on terrorism. Due process is a rarity in most Muslim nations; police and courts are rotten with ineptness, corruption, torture, and meddling by political and religious authorities. When the White House urges a crackdown, as it frequently does in public statements and private meetings, it knows—and does not mind—that terrorism suspects are far more likely to face summary executions than fair trials.

Publicly, the administration pretends this isn't true. "In the context of our counterterrorism efforts," Secretary of State Colin Powell said after meeting his Asian and Pacific Rim counterparts at the end of July, "I made the point to all my interlocutors that we still believe strongly in human rights and that in everything we do we have to be consistent with the universal standards of human rights." The next day Powell added, "The United States feels strongly about these sorts of issues and believes that if we are really going to prevail over this plague on the face of mankind, then we have to do it in a way that respects human dignity."

Powell, who is a smart man, knows this is nonsense. Earlier this year, in a report titled "Rights at Risk," Amnesty International warned that "the 'war on terror' may be degenerating into a global 'dirty war' of torture, detentions, and executions." In a statement accompanying the report, which cited a pattern of abuses in Egypt, China, Malaysia, Turkey, and elsewhere, Amnesty International said, "A number of states have introduced new laws that violate human rights standards while others have used existing measures to crack down on opposition." Says Peter Bouckaert, a senior researcher for Human Rights Watch, "The U.S. is facilitating these countries in committing torture to further its aims in the war on terror."

Take Egypt, which is second only to Israel in the amount of aid it receives from the United States. Under President Hosni Mubarak, Egypt is a brutocracy in which Islamic fundamentalists have in recent years been snuffed out in ways so unkind that even the State Department feels obliged, in its annual human rights reports, to criticize it. Mubarak's regime has jailed several thousand Islamists without trial—some held for more than a decade—while hundreds of others have been convicted by military courts in which defendants' rights are few. Since September 11, 2001, arrests and sham trials have been ramped up, according to human rights groups. This is not good news for the alleged perps because,

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CHRISTOPHE VORLET

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as a 1996 U.N. report has noted, "torture is systematically practiced by the security forces in Egypt, in particular by State Security Intelligence." Their preferred methods include electric shocks, whipping, suspension by the wrists or ankles, death threats, and threats of rape against male prisoners. Detainees occasionally die in custody due, as the authorities put it, to "a sharp drop in blood pressure."

This is the environment into which, according to newspaper reports, the United States is discreetly transporting some of the terrorist suspects for interrogation. (Others have been transferred to Jordan and elsewhere.) "After September 11, these sorts of movements have been occurring all the time," a U.S. diplomat told *The Washington Post* on March 11. "It allows us to get information from terrorists in a way we can't do on U.S. soil." As Powell put it in a remarkable statement on September 26, 2001, during the hot aftermath of the September 11 attacks: "Egypt, as all of us know, is really ahead of us on this issue. They have had to deal with acts of terrorism in recent years in the course of their history. And we have much to learn from them and there is much we can do together."

It's not surprising, then, that Mubarak is bubbling with satisfaction over the go-for-it signals he has received from Washington. "[W]e were right from the beginning in using all means, including military trials," he said in a December interview with Al Gomhuriya, a state-owned newspaper in Cairo. "There is no doubt that the events of September 11 created a new concept of democracy that differs from the concept that Western states defended before these events, especially in regard to the freedom of the individual."

Many Americans might agree (with apologies to Barry Goldwater) that Egyptian-style extremism in the name of anti-terrorism is no vice. They would be wrong. Not only for moral reasons but for pragmatic ones as well: Arbitrary arrests and executions, carried out by unloved governments at the bidding of the unloved United States, can lead to those governments being replaced by ones that support terrorists instead. The election in Pakistan in early October was a warning sign: A coalition of religious parties, which had never before fared well at the voting box, won a shocking 45 out of 272 available seats, making them the third-largest group in the National Assembly. Their campaign was based on explicit opposition to Musharraf's support for America's war on terrorism, almost every component of which—from ousting the Taliban in Afghanistan to rounding up Islamists in Karachi—has led the public to view their government as a puppet of Uncle Sam. It would not be terribly surprising if the October 12 terrorist bombing in Bali sparks a similar process in Indonesia, in which an abuse-laden crackdown by a moderate and inept government leads to a surge in support for Islamists. The United States cannot afford another round of blowback. If history teaches us anything—our support for anti-Soviet fighters in Afghanistan begat the post-Soviet chaos that led to the Taliban, which hosted Osama bin Laden and Al Qaeda, spawning Mohammed Atta and September 11—it is that unintended consequences matter.

PAKISTAN'S CRIMINAL JUSTICE system does not operate in a way that William Rehnquist or even Johnnie Cochran would recognize. If police cannot find a suspect—a common occurrence—they often lock up his family and wait for him to turn himself in. The police are, with the exception of elite units, ill-paid and corrupt. You can pay a police officer not to arrest you, or you can pay him to arrest someone else; you can pay him not to torture you or to torture someone else; if you offer suitable incentives, you can involve a police officer in a crime that you wish to commit; and if you wish to escape from jail, that can be arranged for a price, too. A police officer's typical official salary is the equivalent of $30 per month—not enough, as Karachi's police chief told me, to survive on.

Judges are generally made of the same gang-that-couldn't-shoot-straight fiber as the police. When a judge in the Daniel Pearl kidnapping and murder case was asked to subpoena Yahoo for information—the kidnappers issued their demands through e-mail—he suggested the police just arrest "Mr. Yahoo." In addition to ignorance, judges are vulnerable to intimidation. Since the police cannot assure anyone's security, even their own, criminals know that a whispered threat will silence most witnesses and persuade most judges to modify their decisions. It is a vicious circle because police have little incentive to arrest criminals, or let them survive until trial, if they know a conviction is unlikely.

Pakistan has special anti-terrorism courts that were set up in 1997 and—in contrast to regular courts—are supposed to dispense swift and fair justice in cases that involve major crimes, especially sectarian murders and kidnappings. That's the theory, at least. The trial of four of Pearl's murderers was intended to showcase the system. But the case was transferred from one anti-terrorism judge to another and then another; and it involved a change of locale, from Karachi to Hyderabad, because of security concerns of every sort—for the defendants, the lawyers, the witnesses, the judge. The trial was finally held in a jail with no reporters present, and—although the defendants were convicted in July—the verdicts may be overturned on appeal due to evidence that emerged after the trial that indicated the men were not the principal killers.

Whether or not the kidnappers are released on appeal, the men who testified against them are in jeopardy. Jameel Yusuf, director of the Citizens-Police Liaison Committee (CPLC), a private-sector crime-fighting group, now travels with an armed guard and varies the cars he drives so that colleagues of the men he helped to convict will have a harder time assassinating him. Yusuf met with Pearl just before he was kidnapped and later testified at the trial, prompting one of the defendants to call him a "Jewish agent"—tantamount to a death threat in Pakistan. "In this country you can be bumped off very easily," he told me as we were driven to lunch at a private club. There was a police guard in the front seat of our car, and an unmarked car with more bodyguards followed us.

The upshot is that police in Pakistan, as in other judicially deficient nations, take shortcuts to what they consider justice. These days Pakistan faces enormous U.S. pressure for

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action against suspected terrorists because it has been a breeding ground for extremism for more than two decades, since the days of the anti-Soviet jihad in Afghanistan. Many Al Qaeda members have fled to Pakistan since the Taliban's fall and have linked up with local militants who wish to destabilize Musharraf's pro-U.S. regime. Since May, car bombs outside the Sheraton Hotel and the U.S. consulate in Karachi have killed more than two dozen foreigners and Pakistanis, and in August a school for the children of Christian missionaries was attacked outside of Islamabad.

In response to this escalation and to American pressure, Musharraf's government has arrested some of the perpetrators, including key figures in Al Qaeda. It has also, according to Amnesty International, arrested hundreds of Pakistanis and non-Pakistanis without just cause. "The rule of law has been swept aside," the group said in a June report. "Detainees are not treated in accordance with either Pakistani or international law. ... Who is being held where is unknown. Detainees are cut off from family and lawyers, and there are no official notices."

IF YOU WANT to know why these excesses occur, a look at Yusuf's work is instructive. When he co-founded the CPLC in 1989, Karachi—a city with a population of approximately 12 million—was known as the "City of Death." Every morning a few dozen corpses would be scattered around its streets, often with fatal wounds caused by unconventional instruments of torture, such as power drills. The city was a free-fire zone in which violent turf battles were fought among political parties, criminal gangs, and the police; the streets would empty at dusk, like Dodge City at the worst of times.

The police were worse than useless. They were such notorious shakedown artists that citizens were afraid to enter a precinct station to report a crime because they might be arrested or tortured by police trying to extort money from them. Kidnappings by criminal gangs seeking to gain lucrative ransoms from businessmen and their relatives reached epidemic levels because the police were incapable of catching the perpetrators and not terribly interested in doing so; families didn't report abductions until *after* they paid the demanded ransom, fearing the police would botch any raids they attempted. Of course this fed the epidemic; kidnapping became an industry.

Enter Yusuf and the CPLC.

Under Yusuf's direction, the CPLC adopted a ruthlessly efficient strategy of investigation, intimidation, and elimination. The CPLC was set up as a semi-official agency by the provincial government; its headquarters is located on prime government property in the city center. Yusuf—who owns a successful textile business and accepted the unpaid CPLC job because he is essentially a good Samaritan with the righteous anger of a vigilante—worked with army commandos and elite police officers, becoming, in effect, their unofficial leader. He is a short man with the don't-mess-with-me mannerisms of a lion-tamer. His style of speech is not unlike the rhythm of a machine gun—there are short bursts and long bursts that stop as suddenly as they start, and just as you duck when bullets are flying, you listen when Yusuf is speaking.

During a lull in one of our chats, Yusuf pointed to my digital recorder, which was on his desk. He said that he has a digital recorder that looks like a pen. I asked to see it.

"I keep it here," he said, tapping a pen/recorder on his desk.

"A spy device?" I asked.

"This is the type I want," he replied. "You ask permission [to record]. We don't ask permission. No laws to prevent us."

"There are some," I noted delicately.

"We misuse them," he smiled. "That's how we get a lower crime rate."

In the early days of his work, when he wasn't sure whom he could trust, Yusuf deployed his wife and teenage daughters on stakeouts; because Pakistan is a male-dominated society, kidnappers did not imagine that women would be used against them. Yusuf's daughters, wearing scarves over their faces, would stand near drop-off points for ransom payments and provide descriptions of the kidnappers. At times his wife trailed the kidnappers in a car.

The core of Yusuf's strategy was, as the euphemism goes, extra-legal. And it worked. According to CPLC figures, the number of abductions has dropped from 79 in 1990 to 13 in 2001. The reasons why this happened became clear as Yusuf described a case that occurred in October 2001, when two kidnappers were caught by police teams led by Yusuf and other CPLC members (most of whom are, like Yusuf, businessmen donating their time and risking their lives). A third member of their gang remained at large, along with the hostage, who was a businessman's wife.

"When we get two guys, it is very nice, very easy," Yusuf said, sitting in his modern office at the CPLC headquarters in downtown Karachi. Across the hallway were several rooms with modern computers and neatly dressed workers who would not have looked out of place in an American crime lab. (In most police stations in Pakistan, by contrast, you rarely see a computer.) Yusuf recalled that the kidnappers were taken to a nearby police station where he interrogated them.

"One guy was weaker so he broke really fast. I told him, 'Look, I am going to torture you so much that you might die. We don't bother about that because we have two of you. Whether a man in custody dies or not, who cares? You better save your life. The earlier you speak up the better; otherwise let's see how much torture you can take. If you die we will throw you out. Who cares?' "

Yusuf began chuckling, because, as he has been delighted to discover over the years, terrorists themselves can be terrorized quite easily.

"And then of course we promise him, 'Look, we'll feed you. Don't do it again, alright? We'll spare you if you promise on the Koran you won't do anything after this.' Oh, he is most happy. He thinks he's going to be left [alone]. He says, 'Alright, alright.' We get some hot tea for him. So from the hard treatment you come to this state."

The kidnappers were told to give a precise description of the house where their hostage was being held; not just its

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location but what it looked like, the number of entrances, the room in which the abductee was held, and so on. The kidnappers were then taken to the site with Yusuf, on the excuse that further help might be required. As it turned out, the third kidnapper left the house moments before Yusuf and his squad of police officers arrived, so the hostage was freed unhurt.

But the work was not finished. Karachi's newspapers often report in crime stories that a suspected robber, kidnapper, or murderer was "killed in an encounter with police." This tends to be shorthand for saying that the police dealt with the suspect in a summary manner, though as a courtesy they might permit the victim or a relative to deliver the coup de grâce. "Encounters in our country have never been a problem, you know," Yusuf said. "When a judiciary fails, extra-judicial systems take their place. It's a very natural phenomenon, however bad you may feel about it. Everybody wants to protect their people."

So what happened to the captured kidnappers? "Wiped out in the encounter, sadly," Yusuf smiled. "That's how it is. Look, in America you used to hang horse thieves."

THAT'S TRUE, BUT if you want to understand the downside of "justice" of that sort, all you need to do is go to the nearest video store and rent *The Ox-Bow Incident*, a classic western starring Henry Fonda in which three men accused of murder and cattle-rustling are captured by a lynch mob. As one of the posse members says in the film, "'Cause the law's slow and careless around here sometimes, we're here to see it speeded up." Fonda, who opposes the hanging, tells the posse leader, "All you know is you've lost something, and somebody's got to be punished." The three men are hanged, and, as it turns out, they were innocent.

But in today's world, might not this unhappy trade-off be an acceptable price for security? I mentioned to Human Rights Watch's Bouckaert that the unkind methods of justice, such as those used by Yusuf in his anti-kidnapping campaign, can work.

"I'm willing to take those arguments into account, but I don't think we should accept their validity at face value," he replied. "I can just as well say that it's been proven time and time again that torture is not useful in interrogation, that it doesn't lead to reliable information. Look at the Algerian civil war—[torture] led to an escalation of the conflict. The same thing for Zimbabwe's civil war. Israel has been using these techniques for decades, and they certainly haven't stopped terror attacks against Israel.

"I think that's a fundamental error in the war on terrorism. The U.S. could take the moral high ground to distinguish its actions from the actions of the Russian government and Egyptian government, who have committed serious abuses that serve as prime recruiting propaganda for Osama bin Laden. His websites are filled with information about abuses by Russians in Chechnya and the Egyptians and Saudis. It would benefit the U.S. if it clearly distinguished itself from those abusive campaigns and said there is no need to commit torture and kill civilians."

In fact, however, the Bush administration has yet to break a sweat promoting democracy in any country that is not spelled I-r-a-q or C-u-b-a. When Musharraf, who came to power in a coup, staged a crooked referendum in May that extended his rule by five years (one woman said she voted for him 60 times), the State Department had little to say. It has been almost as muffled about Mubarak's crackdown on pro-democracy activists. (The United States decided not to increase aid in protest of Egypt's imprisonment of Saad Eddin Ibrahim, but Cairo's $2 billion in annual aid was never in jeopardy.) And you will need to be infinitely patient if you wish to hear a word of serious criticism from President Bush about the Russian army's continuing violations in Chechnya. The White House has even refused to criticize Russian authorities for using chemical gas to end the siege of a Moscow theater by Chechen terrorists, which killed more than 100 hostages, including one American. "Given the fact that the terrorists were clearly serious and had already killed people, and apparently had the theater booby-trapped so all would die, it's important to know what the full circumstances are before venturing further," White House spokesman Ari Fleischer told reporters Sunday.

All is not totally bleak, though. The FBI is increasing its presence in Pakistan and throughout the Muslim world, working with local police departments and security agencies as much as its hosts permit. This can improve the efficacy and fairness of faulty criminal justice systems. In Karachi, terrorist attacks have led to close cooperation between the FBI and the police department's Criminal Investigation Division, an elite unit that focuses on terrorism, and that cooperation has helped produce some of the recent arrests of Al Qaeda members. The FBI has also agreed to train members of the Pakistani police department in the United States and to provide crime-fighting equipment, such as computer and telecommunications gear. Much more of this is needed throughout the Muslim world.

Senior police officials in Pakistan welcome their contacts with the G-men. I had lengthy conversations with Karachi's top anti-terrorist investigator, who, it turned out, is a fan not only of the FBI but of movies about the FBI. When I happened to mention *In the Line of Fire*, which stars Clint Eastwood, the investigator corrected me, noting that the film is about a Secret Service agent. But the world of the FBI, and the world of due process, is far away from his; on his wall is a framed slogan that sums up the quandary of a good cop in a dysfunctional system: "We the willing, led by the unknowing, are doing the impossible for the ungrateful. We have done so much for so long, with so little, we are now qualified to do anything with nothing."

For the foreseeable future the war on terror in foreign lands will be waged by the faulty criminal justice systems that do exist, rather than the ones Powell wishes us to believe exist. The United States needs to be more honest about what our allies are doing, and we must do more to ensure that the eliminations we have urged upon them do not backfire. We have already seen, after all, where that leads. ■

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Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Real Women, Problematic Men

WHERE DO THEY come from? And where do they go? These questions, about the people in one sort of independent film, persist.

Recurrently we see American films that are rooted in ethnic groups—African Americans, Chinese, Japanese, Italians, Indians, Greeks, Native Americans, and others. A recent instance is *My Big Fat Greek Wedding*. The puzzle in these off-center films is not the usual one about how the money was raised to make it. (That puzzle bothers me more with big-budget bombs.) In most cases it is not even about the directors and technicians: they are often known for previous work. The basic question is: where did the actors come from? And, since we rarely see most of them again—in adequate roles, anyway—what happens to them?

The latest ethnic film of note is **Real Women Have Curves** (Newmarket), which has a thoroughly admirable cast. The story, by George LaVoo and Josefina Lopez, based on Lopez's play, is about Mexican-Americans in Los Angeles. The leading role, an overweight girl just graduating from high school, is played by America Ferrera, and her performance is so appealing that she vitalizes the familiar story. Several previous films have dealt with ethnic families who declined to let their intelligent daughter or son go to college on the grounds that no one in the family had ever done it and that the young person's putative salary is needed. But, familiar as we are with this conflict and its probable outcome, Ferrera makes us care about this instance. With charm and anger and hurt, she becomes—as is always the case with good actors in familiar roles—the first and only such person.

Ferrera shows not a trace of clumsiness or "acting." With an assurance based on empathy and imagination, she gives us nothing but the girl she is playing, in every color and turn. The question then is: where did Ferrera acquire these professional skills? The director, Patricia Cardoso, must have helped, but after the coaching was finished, Ferrera then had to step before a camera and do it—and not look coached. More important, finally, what will Ferrera do now? For all her talent and personality, how many parts will she find for overweight Mexican-American young women? Even if she loses some weight (she will never be a nymph), what difference would it make? What is this gifted young woman's future?

Well, perhaps she'll go the Lupe Ontiveros route. Ontiveros plays Ferrera's mother. This woman, disapproving of college for her daughter, is someone with whom the audience cannot sympathize but who must be made comprehensible, a victim of her own upbringing. It is a large role and a difficult one, and Ontiveros fulfills it perfectly. Where did she learn? She has had some twenty-five years of acting in films and television, but what has she been playing? Mostly maids and similar bits. In *Real Women* she has what may well be the role that best uses her gifts to the full. Then will she sink once again into the scenery?

And is this also the future for Ferrera? Her talent is more of a mystery than Ontiveros's, who at least had years of some sort of experience. Ferrera is, so to speak, newborn; exceptional, and now she is faced with what? Maids, etc.?

At any rate, because of Ferrera and Ontiveros and others in the good cast, *Real Women* has its pleasures. We groan silently as the opening is laid out for us, wondering how long it will be before the older unmarried sister, the gentle father, the adoring grandfather, the solicitous high school teacher have done what they have to do and permit us to go home. But then the actors send shivers of light and life through the familiar story.

The dialogue is in both English and (subtitled) Spanish. I saw the film with an audience that was largely of Spanish-speaking people. Sometimes they laughed at Spanish dialogue that wasn't funny to me. Apparently there were some matters of language and family familiarities that were untranslatable. Still, the acting itself is made of universals.

With his first documentary, *Roger & Me*, Michael Moore established himself as an ambling prober of social issues, in that case the relationship of General Motors to the poverty in its and his hometown, Flint, Michigan. I missed his next theater release, *The Big One*, which was chiefly about his tour as the author of a book. His latest is **Bowling for Columbine** (United Artists), which is about, among too many other things, gun control.

The title derives from the fact that the two boys who killed thirteen people at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado in 1999 before killing themselves were fond of bowling. (Moore interviews two girls who were in the same bowling class as those boys. He is as surprised as we are that there is such a class.) His subject then is, or is meant to be, gun control. If those two boys had not had weapons, would they have gone on that mindless rampage? And he puts his questions, with self-conscious amiability, to people in a lot of different places from New York to California.

He wanders considerably from his subject. For instance, he does some interviews in Canada. That country is apparently no more strict about gun sales than the United States, yet the annual rate of homicides by shooting in Canada is proportionately minuscule compared with our eleven thousand a year. This difference is obviously not because of a difference in gun laws; it involves social-psychological realms that are far from Moore's subject.

Most of his relevant material is familiar. He flourishes clips of the National Rifle Association (of which he is a member—possibly to license his questions), including Charlton Heston's address to a large meeting in Littleton a short while after the Columbine bloodbath. Moore also includes sound bites of conservative leaders on the subject of an American's right to bear arms (most of which reminded me, in tenor, of our government's daily ration of minatory sound bites). None of this will enlighten anyone with a television set.

He verges into exploitation. He learns that the Littleton Kmart sold ammunition over the counter and that the two killers bought their bullets there. Moore then finds two survivors—a paralyzed

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boy and one who still carries bullets in his body—and takes them to the national headquarters of Kmart. There he repeats the gambit of *Roger & Me*, where he walked into the offices of General Motors, without an appointment but with a cameraman, and asked to see the president, Roger Smith. Here, with the two boys, he asks to see the president of Kmart and implies that the denial of his request is proof of some sort of injustice or evasion. But he is troublesome enough so that in time, p.r. people come down and announce that Kmart will no longer sell ammunition. Thus some ground was gained (if the promise was kept), but the whole episode has little to do with Moore's presumable cause: stricter laws about guns. It is not much more than a sequence that utilizes those boys for his picture.

Much of the film is Moore's strained evidence of his zeal in the public weal, but there is almost as much self-aggrandizement. Near the end, he interviews Heston in the garden of the star's Hollywood home. (Why Heston agreed to the interview is another subject.) Moore, with neighborly coziness, confronts this monarch of the right with predictable questions, to which Heston gives predictable answers until, rebarbative though he is, he understandably wearies of it and walks away. Our vicar, Moore, bravely calls after him with another question, but Heston just keeps walking. Heroic Moore, we are meant to think.

At the last, the outstanding fact about this film is its distributor. Though the picture is no more venturous than many network documentaries, it is still unusual to see a documentary, especially on a controversial subject, on view in major theaters. ■

Jed Perl on Art

The Court Painter of Montparnasse

An artist whose work is overexposed in one generation is unlikely to find much favor with the next generation, and the phenomenon, a sort of roller coaster in reputations, can cast a long shadow over an artist's achievement. Certainly this has been the case with **Amedeo Modigliani**, who died in Paris in 1920 at the age of thirty-five, and who is now the subject of an important retrospective at the **Albright-Knox Art Gallery** in Buffalo, the first devoted to the artist in this country in some forty years.

In the last years of his short life, Modigliani's casually incisive portraits were generating considerable interest among his comrades in the avant-garde, and even those who might dismiss his stylizations as a glib, sugar-coated primitivism could see that between his paintings and the drunkenly glamorous figure that he cut in the cafés of Montparnasse, there were surely the makings of a popular legend. For something like half a century after his death, Modigliani was one of the most widely reproduced of modern artists. And his work seemed to hold its own in the museums, a landmark in the story of the century as it was related in the Museum of Modern Art and other major institutions. By the late 1950s, however, the tide was turning strongly against Modigliani: he was perceived as too popular, too easy, a faded bohemian cliché. While it may be too much to say that the Albright-Knox exhibition brings this artist back from oblivion, I do think that the case for Modigliani is presented here with admirable vigor. Organized by Kenneth Wayne, a curator at the Albright-Knox, the exhibition is in Buffalo until January 12, after which it travels to the Kimbell Art Museum in Fort Worth and to the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

Modigliani painted an encyclopedic portrait of bohemian Paris, one person at a time, and his canvases, which are by turns and sometimes simultaneously iconic and superficial, have the equivocal appeal of an old-fashioned chronicle powered by a modern, no-time-to-lose sensibility. In Buffalo we see an artist who can be daringly true and just and also almost trashily devious, who has wonderful instincts and talent to burn and who sometimes just goes right ahead and torches that talent. The paintings can feel like portraiture's last, hurried hurrah. By the time Modigliani had hit his stride as an artist, somewhere between 1910 and 1911, he was perfecting what was to become a repertory of at-the-ready signs. They are familiar to everyone: the elongated heads and torsos; the swanlike necks; the sloping shoulders; the blank, almond-shaped eyes. He was a speed king, completing paintings in a session or two. Many of the drawings could well have been tossed off in minutes. And when he carved the curious heads that suggest idols in some private religion and are his finest achievements, he often worked in soft, easily manipulated limestone. Everything in Modigliani's work is short cuts and telegraphed messages. When he paints people he gives us summaries. He is a mythologizer for a hurry-up generation, the perfect court painter for the fast-moving bohemia of Montparnasse, a relatively modern neighborhood on the Left Bank, behind the ancient Latin Quarter, that functioned as a sort of international avant-garde village within the French capital in the years just before, during, and after World War I.

When Modigliani paints his brilliant friends, such as the writers Max Jacob and Jean Cocteau and the artists Jacques Lipchitz and Chaim Soutine, the work can have a tingling immediacy. Modigliani's art, Lipchitz wrote, "was an art of personal feeling. He worked furiously, dashing off drawing after drawing without stopping to correct or ponder. He worked, it seemed, entirely by instinct—which, however, was extremely fine and sensitive, perhaps owing much to his Italian inheritance." To operate so much by instinct is to be a sort of gambler, and Modigliani's virtuosity sometimes suggests a wise guy's manipulative personality. His swelling, swerving contours are authoritative, singular, and also frequently superficial. And yet even when his work, in many of the portraits of blank-eyed beautiful women, is half-baked, it is not necessarily slapdash. He brings his own quickening authority to the gathering excitement of the modern movement. He grasps Cézanne's delicate way of handling paint and the power of an unequivocal contour in Gauguin and Lautrec. He has

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a deft way of assimilating the simplifications and generalizations in the carvings from Africa and the South Seas that were generating so much attention in Paris, and he gives a contemporary panache to the stylizations of Sienese and Florentine painting that he had loved as a young man growing up in Italy. For most of his brief career, Modigliani had a wonderful, casual way of handling paint. And his color, although not exactly plangent, is forceful and dynamic; his grays and browns and blues and terracottas have a real radiance.

Modigliani aimed to turn each denizen of the dreamy, brazen city-within-a-city that was Montparnasse into a heroic figure. He envisioned every woman as The Woman, every poet as The Poet. Each sculpted head is an Idol. There is an elegant bluntness, an easygoing absoluteness about the best of this work. We are pulled into the unfolding drama of the avant-garde, and also into the self-promotion and the vapid narcissism that was already turning this penultimate act of *la vie de bohème* into a marketer's slicked-up spectacle. There is a caricatural element to this work, a devious intuition about people that must have been a part of the intensely self-conscious, see-and-be-seen spirit of Montparnasse. In the finest of his portrait paintings, Modigliani uses a few quick lines to psych a person out. At such times he is an inspired caricaturist.

Caricature also plays a role in Modigliani's sculpture, where he likes to recapitulate ancient forms, the inscrutable gaze of a kouros figure or a Cycladic head, as near-cartoon types. In the series of limestone heads that he worked on between 1910 and 1915, Modigliani's almost grotesquely reduced and exaggerated female faces, with their bold eyes and lips and endless noses, present a superficial idea of iconic grandeur, and Modigliani insists on this idea until the very glibness of the forms takes on a perverse, belligerent grandeur. Several of these heads, especially the ones in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art and the Guggenheim and the Philadelphia Museum, are Modigliani's only sure masterpieces. In the brilliant installation that Kenneth Wayne has devised for Buffalo, six of the heads are presented at the very center of the show, and they have an architectural splendor that suggests some modern, secularized version of the gravely elongated medieval heads of Old Testament kings that once filled the façade of Notre Dame in Paris.

Whether Modigliani is painting his friends or sculpting otherworldly beings, he brings a dramatic angle to his work. You can see that he believes that everybody is an actor and that every face is a mask. Perhaps this belief is nothing less than the essence of the spirit of Montparnasse, a neighborhood where people were known for the dramatic entrances that they made at cafés such as the Dôme, the Rotonde, and the Closerie des Lilas. Modigliani's work comes out of the overheated atmosphere of the Bals des Quat'z'Arts, those social free-for-alls that turned the streets of the Left Bank into a bacchic madhouse, with marauding bands of artists and models got up in elaborate historical costumes that involved lots of nudity and near-nudity. In Modigliani's paintings and drawings of caryatids, there is a playfulness about reviving a classical world that may have less to do with saluting a mythical past than with the costume-party sexual shenanigans of his own day. And yet the theatricality of his cardboard mythology convinces, because this was a time when play was taken seriously.

COURTESY ALBRIGHT-KNOX ART GALLERY

Amedeo Modigliani, *Jacques and Berthe Lipchitz*, 1916

In a world where everybody was intent on cutting a figure, Modigliani was there to help his friends arrange their masks. In his portraits of women, whether of his lovers or of the eye-catching beauties whom he met as he careened through the city, he defines a new kind of informal exquisiteness. The acidic bohemian edges of Lautrec's vampish women give way to a dreamy adventuresomeness. Modigliani's women are creatures of almost Pre-Raphaelite beauty who have been freed from their Arts and Crafts cages. In the paintings of the last couple of years of his life, Modigliani is the cut-rate Ingres of the avant-garde, cranking out swan necks and doe-soft eyes, and the results are frequently but not invariably terrible. He has the true portraitist's instinct for establishing a complicity with his subject. You feel that he gets everybody's number, even when the result is a lousy painting.

No art is stamped more deeply than Modigliani's with the flashing creativity and intent pleasure-seeking of Montparnasse. This artist, born in Italy in 1884, was one of the neighborhood's favorite sons, as dashing as he was gifted, a hard worker when he wasn't out of his mind on hashish and booze. He was small and fine-boned, with pale skin and dark eyes and hair, a man who cut a figure so striking that nobody, woman or man, seems to have failed to comment on his appearance. He was described as a faun, an Italian prince, a young god; and the panache with which he wore his old corduroy suit and red or orange scarf led no less an observer than Picasso to describe him as the best-dressed man in Paris. In one famous photograph, Modigliani, in an unprepossessing pullover sweater, hands on hips, stares out at us with the smoldering look of a new kind of casual romantic hero. Hollywood would not catch up with Modigliani's swaggering informality for thirty-five years, until Marlon Brando and Montgomery Clift arrived from a bohemian New York that had superseded Paris.

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Modigliani pulled people in with the neediness of the sensitive, artistic drunk. That he had had pulmonary illnesses since his youth must have added to his fascination; his excesses were more of a risk than they would have been for a man with a stronger constitution. When he was calm and sober and clean-shaven, women were mesmerized. Friends loaned him money for the next meal or for art supplies. When he was high he was a holy terror. Unkempt, his face dark with stubble, he would go on binges that often seemed to end with Modigliani ripping off every shred of clothing and dancing like a wild man—and not necessarily a very appealing wild man.

MODIGLIANI IS THE subject of a great biography by Pierre Sichel that was published in 1967. Sichel approaches this meteorite of a man with a combination of level-headedness and admiration that brings to mind the best pages of John Richardson's work on Picasso. We see the high jinks and the exhibitionism of bohemian Montparnasse. We also see the cool analytical intelligence with which artists were capable of observing the passing parade, and we see how the Dionysian and Apollonian sides of this modern ferment were part of a unified sense of life, although of course not everybody who was involved was capable of keeping their balance. Sichel is especially good at suggesting how for Modigliani, as for so many artists and writers and dealers who piled into the noisy cafés, the education of a bohemian had begun long before he immersed himself in the great bath of Paris. In cities all over Europe in the years around 1900, young people were falling, and falling hard, for Wagnerism, for Art Nouveau, for Impressionism and Symbolism and Nietzsche and anarchism and a hundred other new things. The arrival in Paris—the city that Balzac had called the head of the world—was always a shock, but it was only the shock of a reality that was in many respects better than the dream that you had been dreaming back home.

For Modigliani, home was Livorno, on the northwest coast of Italy, where his father's family, Sephardic Jews, had for a long time had successful careers in business. His father, Flaminio Modigliani, was a dutiful son who wanted only to maintain the family's stolid, conventional profile. But his mother, Eugenia Garsin, had grown up in Marseilles among relations and friends who were cultivated and intellectually adventuresome, and it was her eagerness to embrace life that ultimately shaped the family. Modigliani was the youngest of four children. Around the time of his birth, his father's business interests took a dramatic nosedive, and this precipitated what eventually became a permanent separation between his parents. His mother took center stage and managed to keep everybody afloat. She worked as a translator, of D'Annunzio among others, and opened a progressive school for girls in Livorno, and generally suggested a willingness to take destiny into her own hands that, for an educated woman of her day, must have had feminist overtones. Modigliani's eldest brother Emanuele became an important figure in Italian socialist politics. As for Amedeo, his mother nursed him through several catastrophic illnesses in his youth, and then watched, obviously with considerable understanding, as he embarked on a life in art.

This beautiful boy, whom his family called Dedo and who in Paris was known as Modi, wanted to be an artist almost from the beginning. In his youth he felt the impact of the Macchiaioli, artists whose interest in rural life and whose painterly approach to nature were a local response to the Barbizon School. (Their work can have the delicate yet stolid impact of a conservative form of Impressionism.) At the same time Modigliani embarked on a close study in Florence, Rome, and Venice of the art of the Renaissance, where the figure reigned supreme, as it would in his own work. Modigliani was an avid reader of Nietzsche and of all kinds of poetry. He could recite long passages by heart; he is said to have carried a volume of *Les Chants de Maldoror* around in his pocket. When it was time to set off for Paris in 1906, Eugenia gave Amedeo enough money to last him several months and a beautifully bound copy of Oscar Wilde's *Ballad of Reading Gaol*. Obviously, Modigliani was a bohemian by right of birth. And Eugenia and some of her relatives seem to have kept sending money to him in Paris, year after year.

THE EXHIBITION THAT Kenneth Wayne has mounted in Buffalo is dedicated to Modigliani but widens the focus so that what we have, as the exhibition's title puts it, is "Modigliani and the Artists of Montparnasse." Aside from Modigliani's sculpture, some of which dates from as early as 1910, Wayne keeps the focus on the last four or so years of the artist's life. By 1915 Modigliani had spent nearly a decade in Paris, some of it in Montmartre, but this is not really Wayne's concern. I understand that much of the work produced in those early years is lost

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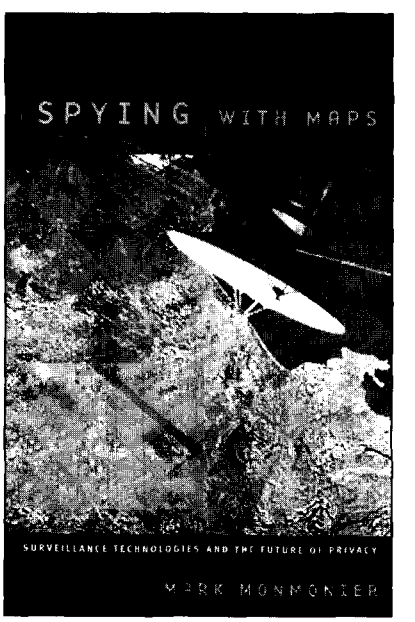

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and that what remains often feels second-hand, imitations of Lautrec's acidic low-life scenes and Picasso's Blue and Rose period nostalgia. Still, I wish that Wayne had included at least a small group of earlier works. And he certainly could have included more of the paintings from around 1915, when Modigliani took his closest look at Cubism and sometimes gave his heads an invigorating, sheet-metal-sculpture angularity. The hanging of the exhibition, which is not chronological, tends to muffle the trajectory of Modigliani's development. You do not feel him reaching his peak in the years 1915 to 1917, nor do you quite sense him beginning to sink into rote work in the last two years.

There is a visual energy to Wayne's installation that more than makes up for some of the conceptual haziness. Wayne obviously wanted to put Modigliani's strongest work forward, not only the sculpture, but also the portraits of artists and poets that are his punchiest paintings. And the paintings and sculptures by contemporaries that Wayne includes—by Picasso, Matisse, Nadelman, Lipchitz, Soutine, Chagall, Brancusi, Léger, Robert and Sonia Delaunay, and others—are used judiciously. They do not overwhelm Modigliani so much as they serve to help us recapture his place in the avant-grade. By showing us a partial view of Modigliani—one curator's view of the best of Modigliani—Wayne has avoided the pedantry that dampens many full-dress retrospectives. And despite his contextualist proclivities, Wayne does not overstate the significance of Modigliani's Jewishness or of the circle of Jewish artists who were among his friends. Although Modigliani was immensely proud of his Sephardic background, it has nothing much to do with what he did as an artist. Wayne's enthusiasm is on target and infectious; you feel Modigliani's avidities.

Drawing, a graphic sense, a will to figuration, is the essence of Modigliani's art. He is a modern besotted with *disegno*, that core value of the Italian Renaissance. There is something almost inherently Italian in the angelic ease of his line, in the way that his contours sometimes speak a truth that the rest of the painting has not earned. For Modigliani, drawing, whether with pencil on paper or with paint on canvas, was a way of processing immediate responses; that line of his charts his enthusiasms, for a woman's unabashed nakedness or for a friend's seen-it-all expression.

Modigliani's reluctance to experiment with the fragmentation of Cubism or the cinematic complexities of Futurism, as so many of his friends were doing, must have had less to do with intellectual scruples than with an unwillingness to ever second-guess his immediate, graphic responses. Yet this graphic style does have its built-in editorializations. If there is a sometimes striking and sometimes merely facile aura of timelessness about Modigliani's fashionable Parisian beauties, it is because whenever he draws their elegantly poised figures he is also retracing the refinements of a thousand Florentine and Sienese Madonnas. This doubleness, which Modigliani ultimately uses in a routinized manner, was related to a more general avant-gardist revival of interest in life drawing, and to the resurgent authority of Poussin and Ingres, who despite their academic credentials struck many artists as stealth experimentalists. Artists far greater than Modigliani, among them Picasso, Matisse, and Léger, were caught up in this new classicism—what Cocteau called the return to order. These artists had pushed harder against academic models than Modigliani ever had; and when they embraced Ingres, they did so with a vehemence that was beyond his abilities. But the popular fascination that Modigliani's women would exert for several generations after his death was fueled by the same factors that made Picasso's Neoclassical lovers such enduring favorites. Here were modern artists who felt the powerful pull of the past.

In Modigliani's sculpture, the Madonnas that we find ourselves thinking about are Romanesque rather than Renaissance, and their powerhouse serenity is reinforced by a study of primitive art, of African masks and South Seas idols. The presence of these strong non-Western influences in the sculpture that is the very height of Modigliani's achievement might suggest that he is not really a classicizing spirit, except that the taste for primitive art among the avant-garde was not unrelated to a search for primal classical structures. In art, as in the new dance forms of Isadora Duncan and Nijinsky, the break with academic standards could signal a return to academic essences, and certainly Modigliani's limestone heads owe as much to Cycladic faces and kouros figures as they do to Africa and the South Seas. The sometimes rough-hewn surfaces also suggest that Modigliani is thinking about Michelangelo's unfinished Slaves, and surely Modigliani, who had from a very early age often said that he aspired to be a sculptor, meant to salute the ultimate divinity of the Italian Renaissance, the ultimate master of *disegno*. The effort to join classical and primitive impulses that we feel in Modigliani's work is something also found in the work of Brancusi, with whom Modigliani was friends in those years, and whose sculpture certainly influenced Modigliani. Both artists wanted to restore the old unity of sculpture and architecture—an idea that had earlier captured the imagination of Gauguin. Modigliani's limestone heads were exhibited as a group during his lifetime. And the one caryatid that exists was part of a vast scheme for a Temple of Beauty, supported by caryatids that he called *colonnes de tendresse*. At times Modigliani seemed to be dreaming of the spirit of the oldest Doric temples, with their limpid brutality.

I still remember the powerful impact of Modigliani's sculpture at the Museum of Modern Art some forty years ago, and in Buffalo, where the Modern's two limestone carvings are joined by five others, that power is multiplied, almost geometrically. (Owing to the delicacy of the Modern's limestone works, they will not travel to Fort Worth or Los Angeles, where other sculpture will join the group.) In 1954, Alfred Barr, in *Masters of Modern Art*, his guide to the Modern's collections, praised Modigliani's sculpture for its "architectural" spirit and "grandeur of line." The *Caryatid*, at the Modern, was installed in an architectural setting, so that it actually seemed to bear weight on its head and arms. This is the only one of Modigliani's sculptures in Buffalo that is fully considered in the round, and the beautiful articulation of the back, with a sense of musculature under pressure that is truly Michelangelesque, suggests what Modigliani might have done if ill health had not finally put the rigors of carving beyond his grasp. (Fewer than thirty of his sculptures survive.)

Especially in the heads, the brazen stylizations and unabashed antinaturalism may lead some to suspect that Modigliani is at his best when he is most abstract, but I prefer to think that for him the appeal of sculptural form, even when highly stylized, was its palpability—the force with which it occupied space in the world. These magnificent heads suggest some primal urge toward signification or figuration. They are almost childishly vehement, and yet they also feel as old as the world. Their spirit was defined most perfectly by one of Modigliani's lovers, Beatrice Hastings, a gifted English journalist who wrote a letter from Paris for *The New Age*, a weekly back in England. "The whole head," she wrote, "equably smiles in contemplation of knowledge, of madness, of grace and sensibility, of stupidity, of sensuality, of illusions and disillusions—all locked away as a matter of perpetual meditation."

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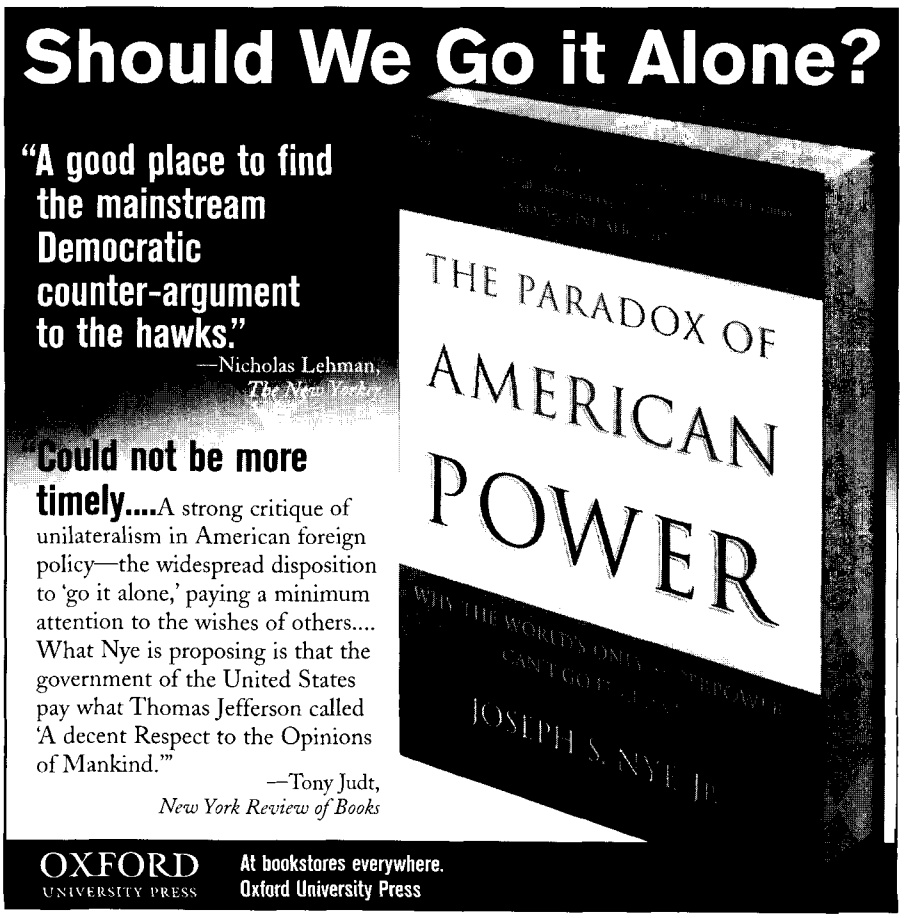
NOTHING THAT MODIGLIANI painted has quite such force, but the urgency of his finest portraits is not unrelated to it. The portraits of his gifted friends, of Lipchitz and Soutine and Cocteau, have their own kind of fast-hitting impact. So do the portraits of Beatrice Hastings. You feel the artist registering the impress of a person, and you are sure that Cocteau's aristocratic airs, Soutine's ear-to-ear grin, Lipchitz's casual self-confidence, and Hastings's seductive, boyish intelligence were exactly this way. These works do not offer the intricate fullness of the greatest modern portraits—say, the complex portrayals of the legendary art dealer Ambroise Vollard by Picasso and Bonnard and Renoir. Modigliani does not really suggest a relationship between artist and sitter. Writing about Modigliani, Cocteau said that "he reduced us all to his type," to "his internal vision," to a vision that is "gracious, noble, acute and deadly." The portraits are great superficial paintings—high-style journalism. Yet they have staying power. Could it be that Modigliani's decision to memorialize so many young artists and writers was fueled by his own awareness that, given his fragile health, his life would be short? In Modigliani's day many artists were fascinated by the direct naturalism of the Greco-Roman portraits attached to mummy wrappings in Egypt, and some of Modigliani's finest heads have that kind of death-defying spontaneity and simplicity.

The great problem for Modigliani is his tendency to paint types, not individuals, and it is especially a problem when he paints beautiful women. There is a piercing fascination to some of these seductresses, with their tossed-back heads and dead-on, staring eyes. Yet Modigliani does not always seem exercised enough by their charms. He can descend into clever typecasting—he is satisfied to catch the manners of the times. His dark-haired beauties are so alike that they can feel like the images in a deck of cards. When he paints young working-class women—and some boys, too—he may mean to recapitulate the delicate social commentary in the paintings of Cézanne and Corot, but the salute to traditional French values, if that is what is intended, feels secondhand. I do not think much of the nudes, either. James Thrall Soby, in the catalogue of the Modern's retrospective in 1951, called them "adult, sinuous, carnal and real," and there is surely a frank athleticism about them. Yet compared to the attentiveness with which Matisse or Bonnard makes love to every inch of flesh, Modigliani's approach seems perfunctory. Instead of stirring erotic heat, Modigliani offers a figure with some sort of built-in pornography: the painterly nude as pin-up. These nudes are sometimes said to be the last in the line that began with Giorgione, and it is true that Modigliani knows how to enclose a body with a remarkably sensuous contour, but his salutes to the classical tradition tend to degenerate into swank anonymity.

It is a measure of Modigliani's instinctive powers as a draftsman that although it is easy to see where his work goes wrong, it is not always that easy to know why. There is genuine intelligence behind even his gimmicks. Modigliani's habit of rendering the eye as a blank, almond-shaped socket is a big problem in many of the paintings, and yet it is not exactly a trite idea. He may well have been thinking of the blank-eyed figures in Michelangelo's Medici Tomb, or of some especially enigmatic portraits that Matisse had done in 1913 and 1914. And Kenneth Wayne has interestingly reinforced the seriousness of Modigliani's simplifications in a room where, in the midst of the painted portraits, he offers a range of sculpture of the period in which the eyes are empty or nonexistent, including Raymond Duchamp-Villon's skull-like *Portrait of Professor Gossett*. Looking from Modigliani's paintings to works by Picasso, Gaudier-Brzeska, Lipchitz, and others, you can see that many artists were reaching for a mask-like visage. And so you may suspect that those blank stares in Modigliani's portraits are an attempt to account for the unknowableness of people. Yet with Modigliani this idea, if it is indeed the idea, is too often reached too easily. Modigliani is a regularizer of avant-garde innovations. And sometimes he manages to pass off his gimmicks with a dashing guilelessness.

By the time he died of tubercular meningitis early in 1920, the affecting mildness of Modigliani's avant-gardism was turning into an unseemly softness. In portraits of 1918 and 1919 he began to fuse and to sweeten his thin oil colors into creepy candy-box effects. I suspect that he was now being influenced by a turn toward a more sculptural articulation of volumes in recent work by Derain, Matisse, and Picasso, and at this point his limitation as a painter, his inability to think about three-dimensional experience in two-dimensional terms, pushes his work into kitsch. Of course Modigliani had been a skeptic about extreme distortion even when Picasso and Matisse were moving in that direction, and it is possible that Modigliani's figures of 1915 and 1916 were part of an atmosphere that encouraged Picasso, Matisse, and Derain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to reconsider a more classicizing and even Italicizing form of portraiture. Picasso was definitely an admirer of Modigliani's work; one of the best of Modigliani's young women in Buffalo is from Picasso's collection. Yet it is impossible not to feel that by the end of the war a sense of occasion and a sense of intensity had gone out of Modigliani's work. The philosophical house of mirrors that classicism would become for Picasso or Matisse or Derain was beyond the capacities of this live-for-the-moment Italian.

KENNETH WAYNE'S CATALOGUE essays contain some good pages about the social and cultural life of Montparnasse. He is particularly strong on the collectors and the dealers and on the development of Modigliani's reputation. And the catalogue presents an archival treasure: excerpts from Beatrice Hastings's novel *Minnie Pinnikin*, about her life with Modigliani, published here for the first time. What the catalogue fails to deliver is the kind of authoritative appreciation of Modigliani's art that would have helped to drive home the essential argument of this unusual retrospective, which is that he remains an important figure in the history of modern art. Wayne is not the writer who could produce such an essay. And yet when I walked into the show at the Albright-Knox, which has been beautifully installed in galleries painted a rich, dark blue, I knew that I was in the hands of a curator passionately engaged with his subject. This curator can pull you into a dialogue with the artist and the art. You can disagree with some of Wayne's choices, but I doubt that anybody can fail to be affected by his impassioned yet canny advocacy.

To encounter a truly adventuresome exhibition beautifully presented in a major museum is not an everyday experience, not by a long shot. This show is a capital event for the Albright-Knox Art Gallery. And it is, amazingly enough, the second important retrospective that the museum has mounted in just over six months. Only last April, the Albright-Knox opened an extraordinary Edwin Dickinson show, organized by Douglas Dreishpoon; it is currently on tour. Exhibitions of Modigliani and Dickinson have been on my wish list for years now, and I know that I am not alone. The Albright-Knox, one of the finest second-tier museums in this country, has avoided the temptation to mount yet another Impressionist exhibit or Picasso show. Somehow, Dreishpoon and Wayne have been able to go with their instincts and their enthusiasms, rather than the bland calculations of some museum marketing executive from hell. While this Modigliani show obviously has blockbuster potential, the project is fueled by scholarly passion, not by business calculation. That is the way museums ought to operate. The big news from Buffalo is that a midsize museum in a midsize city is making taste. What is going on at the Albright-Knox could be a model for many other museums around the country.

Kenneth Wayne and the Albright-Knox have put together an unforgettable museumgoing experience. The greatest danger with a Modigliani retrospective was that the artist's work might have been presented as retro kitsch, as a case study in the follies of avant-garde sensibility and popular taste; but there is not a bit of postmodern world-weariness about Wayne's approach. He actually believes in Modigliani. The installation makes an indelible impression. You feel the thrill of a curator throwing down the gauntlet, of a curator saying: "*This* is why Modigliani matters." I will not soon forget walking through a doorway flanked by portraits of Max Jacob and Cocteau into a small room where the great *Caryatid* from the Modern is joined by a trio of beautiful colored drawings of caryatids. In that orchestration of painting, drawing, and sculpture, you have a summation of what in Modigliani's art will endure. To go through this retrospective is to finally come to terms with an artist whom you had known only fleetingly. Years from now, when Modigliani's name comes up, those who are lucky enough to have seen this show in Buffalo will smile and say, "But you know, there are times when he really is great." ■

Hayden Go Bragh

By R. F. FOSTER

Irish on the Inside: In Search of the Soul of Irish America by Tom Hayden

(Verso Press, 290 pp., $23)

WHO WOULD HAVE thought that Tom Hayden—old 1960s lag, anti-war campaigner, environmentalist, ex-legislator, and long-faced relic of Jane Fonda—had it in him to write a work of comic genius? Yet it is impossible to read *Irish on the Inside* without laughing aloud. As an exercise in unwitting self-parody, it takes its place with those other Irish masterpieces of oblique humor, Flann O'Brien's *The Poor Mouth* and Denis Donoghue's *Warrenpoint*.

Hayden invents a story that brilliantly satirizes the hilarious excesses of identity politics, presenting himself as someone who discovers, late in life, that he is Irish. The transformation is all for the good, even miraculous. He is a Detroit boy, the son of a career accountant with Chrysler, and one set of his great-grandparents had emigrated from Ireland, but for the purpose of Hayden's epiphany this is enough. He traces his Irish descent on a strict basis of ethnic exclusivity (no intermarriage with other immigrant stocks can be mentioned), and he analyzes the shortcomings in his life history and his psyche. There is a bravura section on "Drinking, Sexuality and Assimilation": "I internalized WASP standards of sexual attraction, and was controlled by them. I was sexually colonized. The rejection of Irish Catholics was an indicator of unconscious self-hate."

Hayden conveys a querulous resentment toward his parents for not passing on the tales of oppression that characterized the Irish side of their ancestral experience. Instead they unfeelingly buy him a station wagon for his college graduation. But then everything changed, as "The Sixties Made Me Irish." Inspired by the Kennedy brothers, shocked by John F. Kennedy's "Irish fate" (a concept that is left intriguingly unexplained), the apprentice Irishman is understandably confused by the other kinds of political Irishness

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explored by Joe McCarthy, Father Coughlin, Cardinal Spellman, and Richard Daley, but he is sharp enough to query the opportunism of politicos from other ethnic groups who jump on the Irish-issues bandwagon, such as that unlikely mick Mario Biaggi.

In 1968, the television image of civil rights marchers in Belfast singing "We Shall Overcome" provides the moment of illumination. So there is an easier way of being Irish! Patrick Pearse's proclamation of the Irish Republic in 1916 suddenly "heats my blood involuntarily" in the same way as Smokey Robinson's version of "The Star-Spangled Banner" (a collector's item if ever there was one, and a superb '60s name-drop). The complexities of being an American can promptly be written off, and the Promised Land can be regained, and the ancient enemy can be identified. Having found the key, Hayden sets off, like Candide, to discover the world, which is to say, Northern Ireland.

This provides some fine moments of comedy. Hayden arrives in Ireland in 1976 with his and Fonda's three-year-old son, who is oddly named Troy O'Donovan Garity. Garity, he ingenuously explains, because they did not want to choose "between our public last names," while Garity was "plainly Irish," as well as being an ancestral name. (Hayden himself for a brief period decides to be known as Emmet Garity but then gives it up.) Troy was an Americanization of the name of a young Vietnamese man accused of conspiring to kill certain American officials and executed. O'Donovan was for O'Donovan Rossa, a nineteenth-century Irish Fenian dynamitard—or, in Haydenese, someone "who directed a military campaign against England."

Thus saddled, the infant Troy and his father land in Ireland "in a quest to reverse my assimilation." Troy is briefly shown the General Post Office in Dublin, where the Rising of 1916 was inaugurated, and told about his "ancestors," and driven north. 1976 is a tense time in Ireland, of course, and the identity-seekers are quizzed at a checkpoint as they cross the border into Northern Ireland. When they are waved through by the "lethal-looking" British soldiers, young Troy, the scion of Hollywood royalty and the Midwestern middle class, "burst out, 'Dad, don't call me Irish because the soldiers will shoot me.' He was learning that his roots could get him killed."

On this first visit to Northern Ireland, Hayden meets and talks to an impressive number of people who all subscribe to the Republican analysis of the situation: the British are the colonial oppressors whose removal would solve all problems, the Protestants/Unionists are deluded brethren whose true interests have been somehow hidden from them. Some droll tongue-in-cheek language is employed. Republicans, Hayden is told by Martin McGuinness, "accept that the IRA has a role to play." They certainly do, but as the years pass the way they play it seems unaccountably to distance the island of Ireland from the desired thirty-two-county republic rather than to usher it in.

Tom Hayden by David Cowles for The New Republic

Marooned in the Babylonish captivity of California, Hayden becomes a state senator and takes up Northern Irish issues such as the "Fair Employment" principles proselytized by Sean MacBride—an imposition of religiously defined quotas for job recruitment by American firms investing in the province. (The MacBride principles also implied a politically useful, but historically untenable, parallel with conditions for blacks in South Africa, which was manna from heaven for IRA publicists.) This policy, however well-meaning, put clearly counterproductive restraints on those actually doing something to make the Northern Irish economy lurch into take-off; but Hayden finds it incomprehensible that constitutional Northern nationalists such as John Hume opposed it. "I felt stranded again," he miserably records. In the 1990s he revisits Northern Ireland, still believing in the gospel according to Patrick Pearse and proclaiming that the solution for "colonialism" is immediate British withdrawal of all military and police presence, though the IRA should retain arms to defend their communities. At last things are changing: Sinn Fein is entering politics, and Hayden meets the group's "outgoing, energized local elected official" in Monaghan.

> "Welcome home!" he proclaimed with a smile and a backslap. He gave a quick history of Monaghan's rural economy, showed us the site where a young man was killed by a British sniper from north of the border, and asked about Clinton's new policies, including the potential for investment and tourism. I was beginning to feel roots here at last.

Of course, what is really happening is that Sinn Fein has at last realized that the traditional desideratum of a united thirty-two-county socialist republic is a pipe dream, and that moderate Unionists are moving toward an acceptance of power-sharing, and that both London and Dublin desperately want a face-saving modus vivendi established for the trouble-

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some Six Counties that will incidentally split the Republican movement.

The world of Clinton, Major, Reynolds, and Blair is decidedly not the world of Patrick Pearse. But the narrator of this comic tale mischievously never allows his protagonist to recognize this fairly simple fact. Instead, the dispiriting reality-pill is sugared by the consolation of identity politics. He seeks help, and finds it, with a therapist in California who specializes in overcoming the "toxic transmission of shame" associated with being Irish. Hayden neatly evades all the complications of the post-1960s world by opting for ethnic purism. There is also a reassuring demonstration that all radicals are Irish under the skin.

> The Celtic tribes that gained ascendancy in Ireland around 350 B.C. were from the Iberian world. In the Irish foundation myth, the sons of Mil came to Ireland from Spain. That would make me, and all the black-haired Irish, distant blood relations of the Spanish and their descendants in Mexico and Latin America. The San Patricios were defending their distant kin when they fought with Mexico against the United States!

The Candide theme continues. Talking to South Armagh republicans ("a captive minority"), Hayden is straightfacedly informed that the locals think of the prehistoric Cuchulain saga as a background to modern local life, "the way you Americans think of the Founding Fathers." (This may be a cunning reference to the tales spun by cynical locals to Victorian travelers such as Thackeray.) Even when his interlocutor adds that "you can get all the Irish sagas on the Internet," the Michigan boy fails to see the joke.

He also realizes an extraordinary truth as he wanders into this new world: everyone is Irish! John Lennon was "an Irish working-class lad from Liverpool"; Che Guevara and C. Wright Mills are important Irish figures who denied or forgot their racial Irishness; George Mitchell and Bill Clinton "discovered their Irishness late in life," but better late than never; Tony Blair is a sort of honorary Irishman because he "married a Catholic professional." This theme dominates the end of the comedy, compensating for the deficiencies of political reality.

The final section of Hayden's book, "Recovering the Irish Soul," is possibly the funniest. It is a sermon to "the Irish"—actually, the American-Irish—to stop denying their true identity and "transcend the superficiality of our skin color to join in solidarity with the majority who are darker than ourselves." The identity-convert exhorts that they must

> join the renewal of spirituality, including catholic spirituality, by identifying with the religious dissenters, liberation theologists, goddess and nature traditions, and the deeply creation-centered spirituality of Brigid and Columkille that infuses the original Irish character.

Earlier we are told that the Irish have an ancient purity, "older than the English." The corruption, the frivolity, and the materialism of the actual Irish Republic (the attitude of which toward Northern violence has mortified poor Hayden throughout) must be faced and combated. Modern Irish liberal commentators such as Fintan O'Toole, Padraig O'Malley, and Garret FitzGerald (strange bedfellows) are self-hating Irishmen, much as Tom Foley and Tip O'Neill represent "cases of internalized infatuation with the colonizer."

"We must not seek respectability by rhetorically denouncing the IRA," Hayden preaches. And yet miraculously "the peace process has enabled a revival of the republican spirit across Ireland," making Gerry Adams the most popular politician in the republic! (Or so one poll reported in September 2000.) This bogus analysis conceals a wicked irony: the peace process, of course, is solidly founded on the abandonment of Sinn Fein's traditional conception of "republicanism" by the people of the Irish Republic, who, as soon as they got the chance, near-unanimously voted to drop the constitutional claim to Northern Ireland.

But a New Age Irishness may preserve Candide's innocence.

> We can start by reinhabiting our Irish self in simple ways. Read Irish history, novels, and poetry. Listen to traditional Irish music. Learn a few words in the Irish language (just a few will do, to show willing). Observe the old calendar of festivals, based on the seasons of solstice and equinox. Give your child an Irish name. Save St. Patrick's Day from those who think that getting drunk makes you Irish.... If you are religious, ask for the observance of Saint Brigid's feast on February 1.

This passage, which transcends parody, is an almost word-for-word repetition of the kind of manifesto published in the 1920s by the *Catholic Bulletin*—an almost psychotically reactionary journal devoted to denouncing world conspiracies involving Freemasons, jazz, English newspapers, or all three, and setting the clock of the new Irish state back a couple of millennia. But Hayden's version of this gospel is subtly updated by other injunctions: parents are to "question why the school curriculum sanitizes the Famine experience"; Irish Protestants (those awkward strangers at the feast) are to "identify with rebels like Wolfe Tone, Thomas and Robert Emmet, Henry Joy McCracken and James Connolly [a Catholic convert]." Leftist politics are to be built up not along class lines but along ethnic ones—not a process with very encouraging historical precedents, but clearly another one of Hayden's satiric inflections.

What to Do When Surrounded

In a tactical sense, you have become nothing
But flanks. To such fundamental questions
As *Where Is the Enemy?* and *Where*
Should I Direct my Fire? your answers
Have been reduced to a simple minimum:
Anywhere and Everywhere. Only one
Question will have a recreational value:
Where Is the Enemy's Weakness? You may dig in
And hope incompetent or lunatic
Enfilading fire, brought on by hubris,
Will cause your enemy to decimate
His opposite numbers firing the opposite way.
Meanwhile, you may stand indifferently
And casually upright in the midst of battle
Through shot and shell, facing at every turn
A circular firing squad, may brandish the banner
With the strange device of your country
Right or wrong at the heart
Of this debacle, unless those colors seem
In the end less subtle
Than the shades of your uniform
And your skin, which were intended
To blend with the earth, to form a useful part
Of your more natural surroundings.

David Wagoner

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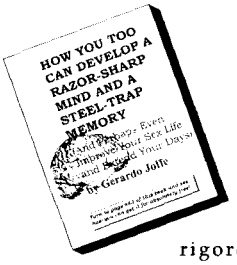

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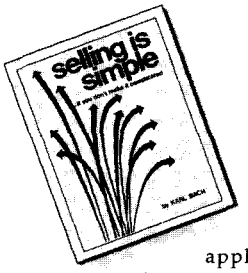

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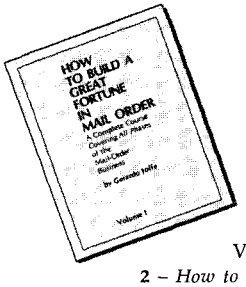
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It all ends, appositely, in a dream in which the reborn but completely demented author visualizes himself taking handfuls of grave soil from America back to Ireland. The dead are to be reclaimed, and possibly reawakened. America is to be left behind in the form of a "landscape with plaques of remembrance instead of one prostrated to malls and surveyors' dulling gridlines, a map becoming alive with reclaimed Irish stories." Meanwhile, on the other side of the Atlantic, "Irish from all over are migrating home," bearing sods of memory that will create "a place to bury pain and grow our history." Like much great comedy, this surreal and deluded vision is alarming as well as side-splitting. Still, one reservation remains at the end of this extraordinary book. For all its satiric invention, might Hayden not be himself reviving a Mr. Dooleyesque stereotype by creating a hero who so epically mingles myopic self-satisfaction with bone-headed obtuseness? ■

Sex and the City

By CHRISTOPHER BENFEY

Republic of Dreams: Greenwich Village, The American Bohemia, 1910–1960 by Ross Wetzsteon

(Simon and Schuster, 615 pp., $35)

GREENWICH VILLAGE HAS always been nostalgic for the real Greenwich Village. In his garrulous account of Village lore from 1910 to 1960, Ross Wetzsteon notes that the phrase "Greenwich Village isn't what it used to be" appeared as early as 1916. The idea of an authentic New York bohemia lost in the sands of time goes back further still, and it is not confined to the boundaries of Fourteenth Street and Houston. Stephen Crane lamented in 1893 the move uptown, from East Twenty-third Street, of the Art Students' League: "this staid puritanical building once contained about all that was real in the Bohemian quality of New York." Bohemianism, at least the American variety, may itself be a form of nostalgia for those "blithe days" evoked by Crane, when "the very atmosphere of the old place cut the austere and decorous elements out of a man's heart and made him rejoice when he could divide his lunch of sandwiches with the model."

The allure of blithe days is the best excuse for a book like Wetzsteon's, with its shameless inquisitions concerning precisely which artists and writers shared sandwiches with which partially clothed models. Wetzsteon, a longtime editor and drama critic at *The Village Voice*, pauses now and then to grope for what he calls the "role" of Greenwich Village in the American imagination:

> The Village has had such a multiplicity of meanings that it has served as a testing ground for many of the major issues of American history, among them the relationship between individual and community, the link between cultural and political revolution, the adversarial stance of writers toward their society, the value of marginality as a spur to creativity, the necessity for a safety valve for social disaffection, the definitions of success and failure, and the role of iconography in cultural history.

By "iconography," Wetzsteon does not mean—as an art historian might mean—the visual images associated with a particular figure or cultural moment. He means the myths and the legends and the "oral history" that cling to a reputation—as in the slang use of "cultural icon." Wetzsteon is curious about the political views of his chosen subjects and is always alert to signs of sexism or racism. He reaches for broad generalizations about how "Villagers" shifted their collective allegiances from decade to decade: "the link between radicalism and bohemianism, so characteristic of the teens, came apart in the twenties." But his main interest is in the sandwiches. You will not learn much of anything about American literature or art from this book, and nothing whatsoever about architecture or city planning or the economy of Greenwich Village. But you will know everything you need to know about Edna Millay's lovers or about Theodore Dreiser's performance in bed. ("A forest of intrigue," Mencken called him, who "devotes himself largely to the stud.")

THE MOVIE *REDS* was long enough, God knows, but Wetzsteon's book, six-hundred-plus pages, often feels like a longer *Reds*. "Love still lingered in Jack's heart, but with nearly all of Europe preparing for war his thoughts were far from an all-white bedroom in the Village." "Jack" is John Reed, the white bedroom belongs to Mabel Dodge, and the war that divides them is World War I. In Wetzsteon's narrative, politics always takes a back seat to love. "In saying goodbye to Jack, Mabel also bid farewell 'to the labor movement, to Revolution, and to anarchy.'" If love seems to outweigh war and other distractions in his account, Wetzsteon has an explanation. Any apparent "overemphasis on the sex lives of major figures," he contends, is a natural result of "the Villagers' commitment to self-fulfillment and the personal as the political." And if Jack and Mabel's love affair seems a little, shall we say, massaged, this, too, registers a deep truth, since "the story of the Village is, in large part, the stories old Villagers have told new Villagers about former Villagers."

Downtown bars serve as settings for many such stories. Dylan Thomas, "the drunkenest man in the world," at the White Horse Tavern; Jackson Pollock at the Cedar Tavern; Dawn Powell sipping wine in coffee cups at the Lafayette Motel café: such smoke-filled, booze-saturated settings, where everyone remembers having said witty things, allow Wetzsteon to indulge his view of Greenwich Village as a never-ending party. Wetzsteon's favorite literary form for evoking such occasions is a variation on the list of Gatsby's party guests. While some of the lists are just name-dropping, Wetzsteon occasionally gets off an annotated catalog that suggests that he is laughing with us. Who were the emancipated women of the Heterodoxy Club, which met during the teens to discuss "women's issues" and art?

> Mabel Dodge was a member—she never saw a membership list she could resist—and Susan Glaspell, Crystal Eastman, Inez Milholland, Ida Rauh, and Henrietta

CHRISTOPHER BENFEY teaches literature at Mount Holyoke College. His new book, *The Great Wave: Gilded Age Misfits, Japanese Eccentrics, and the Opening of Old Japan*, will be published by Random House in the spring.

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> Rodman.... Rose Strunsky, one of the three oft-wooed daughters of legendary Papa Strunsky, soft-touch landlord to dozens of writers and artists, was legendary for storing dynamite under her bed in her boardinghouse in anticipation of the anarchist insurrection soon to come. Ruth Hale joined as well—wife of Heywood Broun, mother of Heywood Hale Broun, and founder of the Village's Lucy Stone League, which advocated the right of married women to keep their maiden names.

We may not know the "legendary" Papa Strunsky nor his equally "legendary" oft-wooed daughter, but the flavor of this passage supports Wetzsteon's larger point about Village "iconography." It also suggests a truth that runs counter to his focus on major literary figures, namely, that the best stories may not attach themselves consistently to the most important names.

THE STRONGEST SECTIONS of the book are about theater, the cultural terrain that Wetzsteon knows best. Inside this baggy volume is a smaller, tighter book about the Provincetown Players—the "vacationers' romp" on Cape Cod in the summer of 1915 that became a revolutionary force in American theater. Poets and novelists were encouraged to dabble in drama, and their plays were seriously, if hurriedly, produced in New York by the Players. Forgotten plays by Edna Millay and Wallace Stevens, William Carlos Williams and Theodore Dreiser, appear in a fresh light in Wetzsteon's pages. One wishes for more. Dreiser's *The Girl in the Coffin*—what exactly was that about? And what precisely was so "repulsive" (*New York Herald*) or "conspicuously offensive" (*New York World*) about Dreiser's *The Hand of the Potter*?

If the Provincetown Players produced much that was lightweight, improvised, and ephemeral, the company also gave rise to a great playwright in Eugene O'Neill. The emergence of *A Long Day's Journey Into Night* and *The Iceman Cometh* from this experimental hothouse gives glamour and grandeur to the minutiae and the inevitable barroom scenes of Wetzsteon's narration. (Since bars are conspicuous in O'Neill's plays, the emphasis seems fitting.) Wetzsteon's writing snaps into focus when he is detailing each step of O'Neill's halting progress, noting how his idea of theater was haunted by his father's swashbuckling rendition, more than six thousand times in twenty-five years, of the Count of Monte Cristo. "Gene hated the hammy grandiloquence of nineteenth-century theater," but he "emulated its grandiose passions." The observation points to both an interesting paradox in O'Neill's work and a source of its enduring popularity.

Other genres do not fare as well in Wetzsteon's book. He fills his narrative with poets—there are chapters on Millay, Williams, Hart Crane, Maxwell Bodenheim, and Delmore Schwartz, and one on e. e. cummings and Dylan Thomas—but there is almost no poetry. In the twenty-two-page chapter on Schwartz eight lines of poetry appear, and in twenty pages on Hart Crane only two lines, and terrible ones at that. In sixteen pages on Dylan Thomas, Wetzsteon quotes four lines of doggerel and nothing else, unless one counts the bathetic allusion in the account of Thomas's squalid death: "Dylan did not go gently." In a chapter on William Carlos Williams, Marianne Moore, and the "poetry wars" (little magazines supporting Modernist writing against genteel conventions), not a single line by "Marianne" or "Bill" is quoted. Only Millay's poetry inspires Wetzsteon to quote in abundance, mainly to demonstrate how in lines such as these—"Now will the god, for blasphemy so brave,/Punish me, surely, with the shaft I crave!"—Vincent (as he calls her) "frankly depicted women's erotic desire, in imagery at once bold and ambiguous." Wetzsteon likes the couplet so much that he quotes it again two pages later. By then he is deep into Millay's affair with Edmund Wilson ("Bunny" to Wetzsteon), and an annotated list—more Gatsbyism—of Millay's lovers.

Wetzsteon quotes approvingly Millay's strenuous objection to a request by Harper and Brothers for a volume of her love poems in which she would confide, in a foreword, "when, where, and under what impulsion" those poems were written. Millay conceded that readers with no interest in poetry "might well be attracted by the erotic autobiography of a fairly conspicuous woman, even though she did write poetry." She wittily concluded her letter by telling her publisher that "although I reject [your] proposals, I welcome [your] advances." Wetzsteon misses the irony that his own chapter on Millay is precisely the kind of erotic biography that would have horrified her. Similarly, Willa Cather comes in for a lot of probing remarks about how she "never identified herself as a lesbian," though some of her relationships "certainly embodied lesbian longings." It is bracing to read, in this context, Cather's own dismissal of bohemian iconography: "The business of an artist's life is not Bohemianism, for or against, but ceaseless and unremitting labor." This is the message of her best story about Greenwich Village, "Coming, Aphrodite!", a story of artists sharing sandwiches with naked models that Wetzsteon summarizes. He is right that the theme of the story is "the moral contrast between two different types of artistic ambition—Eden sees success as public adulation, Don sees it as aesthetic achievement." Cather respects only the latter.

REPUBLIC OF DREAMS wears its flaws, like medals, on its sleeve. There is the matter of Wetzsteon's use of first names. We get not only Jack and Mabel, but Delmore and Dylan, Willa and Hart, Bill (William Carlos Williams), Theodore (Dreiser), Clem (Clement Greenberg), and—my favorite—Estlin (e. e. cummings), as in "Like his New England predecessor Thoreau, Estlin argued that in authoritarian times the free man had no choice but jail." Why the familiarity? Because, says Wetzsteon, the Villagers were committed to "informality and intimacy. So a use that might be overly familiar in other contexts seems perfectly appropriate in the case of the Village." Seems perfectly appropriate to whom, exactly?

Wetzsteon died in 1998, and some of the other problems with this book cannot be blamed on him. The bibliography is slapdash, listing four books on Delmore Schwartz but neither Saul Bellow's *Humboldt's Gift* nor James Atlas's biography of Schwartz. There are no notes of any kind, so that quotations from "a critic" or "a friend" remain unidentified. It is difficult to tell how finished the manuscript was. The last chapter, on the Abstract Expressionists, devolves for several pages into a list of painters, with a brief paragraph on each one. The connective tissue of this chapter is that Pollock, a heavy drinker, pissed often, though rarely in toilets.

The Abstract Expressionists, with their chauvinistic conviction that New York had replaced Paris as the center of the art world, can at least be said to have been securely anchored in the blocks around Eighth Street. The location of their studios was, so to speak, iconic. But this is less true of the poets and the novelists whom Wetzsteon enlists as "Villagers." Dawn Powell and Edna Millay (the "embodiment of the spirit of the Village in the twenties," although "she lived there for only thirty-six months") reveled in their Village addresses; but it seems misleading to label as Villagers such Midwestern writers as Hart Crane and Willa Cather, the Southern novelist Thomas Wolfe, or poets such as Williams and Stevens, who kept New York at a tactful arm's length. Dylan Thomas can hardly be called a Village poet, though he was, briefly and passionately, a Village

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drunk. Such committed Villagers as the poet Maxwell Bodenheim, accorded a chapter by Wetzsteon, are forgotten beyond retrieval. Even Wetzsteon concedes that the "only astonishing quality" in Bodenheim's poetry "is its quantity."

WETZSTEON'S AVIDITY FOR poets and novelists has blinded him to other significant figures in Greenwich Village. As a lifelong editor and critic, he seems to have misprized his own guild. For where the Village truly excelled during the twentieth century was not as a refuge for poets and novelists—who tended to prefer Connecticut or New Jersey or upstate New York—but as a headquarters for critics, editors, and journalists of genius, who needed to be near their employers, their subjects, and their competitors. Such astute Village-based critics as Randolph Bourne and Van Wyck Brooks are worth a hundred Bodenheims, but they are overlooked in Wetzsteon's narrative. Edmund Wilson appears in the book as Millay's stuffy, inept lover, devoid of passion or élan, instead of what he was: the greatest twentieth-century American critic, and a writer of genius.

The writers and the editors of *Partisan Review* provide comic relief in Wetzsteon's chapter on Delmore Schwartz. "*Partisan Review* began as a Village ménage à trois among Marxism, modernism, and bohemianism, with bohemianism soon feeling neglected and moving out, and Marxism and modernism continuing to cohabit, but finally going their separate ways." But the "*Partisan Review* crowd," as Wetzsteon patronizingly calls them, were Schwartz's mentors and sometimes his betters. Grazing recently in a single issue from the fall of 1944, I came across Hannah Arendt's tribute to Kafka as visionary predictor of fascism and totalitarianism, Paul Valéry on the death of Bergson, and Robert Lowell's steely sonnet on the liberation of France. Such international reach, emanating from the Village, was one of the glories of the "*Partisan Review* crowd," who rejected the insularity that Wetzsteon prefers.

When Henry James evoked Washington Square as it was during the quarter-century before the Civil War, he described a genteel neighborhood of "Old New York" manners and ritualized restraint. Today Greenwich Village is again a neighborhood of high rents and respectability, more like it was in 1825 than at any time during the intervening period. Only the students of New York University and the occasional drug dealer in the Square offer a bit of bohemian color. If nostalgia is the defining mood of the Village, we can recognize in Wetzsteon's account a literary throwback of sorts, the narrative evocation of a town and a time that was particularly popular during the 1920s and 1930s. Evocations of "Old New Orleans" or "Old New York" or "Old Boston" wove snatches of cultural history and colorful biography into misty descriptions of long-vanished houses and streets. Many such books, antiquarian in spirit and often dismissed by scholars, remain in print, and some of them, such as *The Gangs of New York* by Herbert Asbury and *The World of Washington Irving* by Van Wyck Brooks, are permanent achievements of American literature. Brooks's books about New York and Boston culture have a sustained intelligence, genius for quotation, and human generosity rare in any time. If *Republic of Dreams* awakens a hunger for better books in a similar vein, it will have served its modest part. ■

Robots and Hopes

By DAN HALPERN

Cross Roads by Karel Čapek translated from the Czech by Norma Comrada

(Catbird Press, 256 pp., $14)

Karel Čapek—Life and Work by Ivan Klíma translated from the Czech by Norma Comrada

(Catbird Press, 259 pp., $23)

THE NOVELIST Josef Škvorecký tells the following story about Karel Čapek and the pronunciation of the Czech language. After Škvorecký fled Czechoslovakia in 1968—his books and his point of view had failed to find favor with the Comintern's fleet of international book critics—he came to Cornell University. There, at a cocktail party, he found himself cornered by a young American woman who whispered into his ear: "I know Kapek!" This was, it seems safe to suppose, about as far from what a Czech writer who had made it to the West would wish to hear young American women whispering at parties: Kapek was a leader of an ultra-Stalinist group in Prague who at the time of Škvorecký's departure had been bothering himself with the fervent and very public wish for the delivery of all dissident writers to the KGB, which presumably would have been pleased to offer its literary criticisms to Škvorecký in person.

Škvorecký's new friend meant to communicate that she was a reader of Karel Čapek (which is pronounced "ch" and not "k"), who was the most famous man of Czech letters for the first half of the twentieth century. Čapek's books were translated and distributed throughout the world; his plays were rushed to Broadway; he was the right-hand intellectual of Czechoslovakia's first president, T. G. Masaryk. In 1936, the Nobel Committee apparently promised Čapek their prize if he would moderate his anti-fascist stance and write something suitably inoffensive. (His wife reported that Čapek told them he had already submitted his doctoral dissertation.) When the Nazis arrived in Prague, his head was at the top of their list of heads to be rolled; nobody told them that he had died three months before.

The replacement of Čapek by Kapek is an apt metaphor for the progress of East-Central European literature in the twentieth century. The Nazis banned Čapek immediately, as that was all that was left for them to do by way of punishing him, and in this they apparently outdid

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the Communist regime, which managed only official disapproval of his work after the war. But the Communist literary strategy achieved its own measure of success, because by 1968 the world was generally much more interested in the various Kapeks of the Eastern Bloc than it was in Čapek. With the Cold War in full flower, the West wanted Eastern writers whose teeth had been knocked out by the gray men of the Evil Empire. And Čapek faded from view.

ČAPEK'S POLITICAL URGENCIES were of a different color. Indeed, he was at the center of a new political mainstream. Born in 1890, under the antiquated rule of Franz Josef's Austro-Hungarian Empire, Čapek's career began and ended with the birth and the death of his country's self-determination. From 1917, the year before the creation of the First Republic of Czechoslovakia, to 1938, two months after the end of the First Republic and shortly before the short-lived, Sudetenland-less Second Republic would succumb to decades of occupation, Čapek published at an astonishing rate, as if he knew he had only twenty years with his hand on the rudder of his country's cultural and political course. For that time, he was the foremost literary voice of a new nation, one that had not been a nation for centuries and would not be sovereign again for fifty years.

Čapek, the youngest of three children, was born in a small mining town in Bohemia, the western region of the Czech lands bordering Germany, Poland, and Austria, to a beloved local doctor and a depressive mother. The eldest child, Helena, became a memoirist. Josef, the middle child, grew up to become one of the leading Czech artists of the period, and the two brothers, an inseparable pair, began a writing career together, publishing grotesques under the moniker "The Brothers Čapek" in literary journals, and eventually a play and two books of stories.

The brothers left the countryside for the Moravian city of Brno in 1905, and they moved to Golden Prague in 1907, where Karel enrolled at Charles University. After studying in Berlin and in Paris, he managed to finish a doctorate in philosophy a year into the war, in the fall of 1915. (He had been excused from service owing to a condition in his spine, which was slowly immobilizing itself.) In 1917, the same year he published his first book without Josef, Čapek began his work as a journalist.

It is hard now to overestimate the importance of the feuilleton, the short literary essay or sketch, in the European literary-journalistic tradition. It is the very opposite of what we think of as a column, or as "opinion journalism": a genuinely literary island in the daily paper, in which writers had license to do whatever they wished, more or less. During the nineteenth century, the feuilleton played an important role in the Czech National Revival, the push for cultural and political independence from the Austrian empire. Of the three most important Czech prose writers of that century, two—Karel Havlíček and Jan Neruda (after whom the Chilean poet Pablo Neruda named himself)—were known as much for their columns as for any other writings. Čapek joined the staff of the paper *Národní listy* ("National Newspaper") in 1917, one of the oldest and leading dailies in the country, once edited by Jan Neruda himself. He left it in 1921 for *Lidové noviny* ("Popular News"), where he worked for the rest of his life. He was a master of the lighthearted casual, the sort of small, clever ruminations on clumsy people or cats that James Thurber and E. B. White later became known for in the United States. But Čapek's feuilletons often took the form of exhorting the nation. In one of his first, "Newspapers and Science," he wrote:

> In times of peace people have often called for the cultural level of newspapers to be raised, and rightly so.... But is this the time and place to launch a new cultural agenda? Every thought today must be directed to the freedom of the nation and only to that! To the freedom of the nation, yes, but add to that also the freedom of an educated, free-spirited nation. And in this respect we are not fully prepared.

When asked if he would return to drama or fiction, Čapek replied: "I must educate the nation now." It was a task he rarely shirked, and one that had much to do with the limitations to the artistic heights Čapek reached.

Of course, Čapek did continue to write for the stage and to write fiction, but he was often incapable of preventing a streak of didacticism from creeping into his artistic efforts. Certainly after 1920, when Čapek published *R.U.R. (Rossum's Universal Robots)*, the play that made him famous around the globe, he deeply felt the responsibility of being his fledgling country's national writer. But just as certainly, the didactic tendency was already there to begin with. *R.U.R.*, in which a company mass-produces a fleet of robots to do all the work humans do not want to do until the robots realize that they do not want to do it either and revolt, has a strong simplicity and clarity to its message. Despite its anti-utopian theme and

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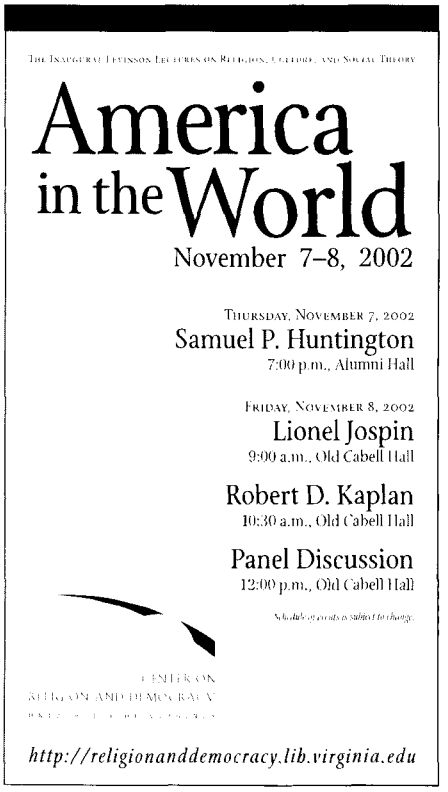

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its dire, vaguely Marxist warnings—Čapek is very direct about the dangers of rapacious materialism and alienation from the means of production, though he would soon make quite clear that he was not a Communist—the play is fundamentally an expression of the optimistic humanism that he would espouse through most of his career. Progress is not necessarily bad, Čapek teaches; we just need to remember to love each other, and so forth.

This sentimental moralism is most evident in the plays, particularly his late anti-Nazism works *The White Plague* (1937) and *The Mother* (1938), but also in Čapek's science fictions, a favorite form for his most strenuously political allegories. (During the waning of Čapek's fame, the coining of the word "robot," from the Czech *robota*, or drudgery, in *R.U.R.*, could be counted on to maintain a small cultural currency for him, though it was actually Josef who came up with the term.) Of these, the most successful, *War With the Newts* (1936), concerns a race of overgrown salamanders who learn to read newspapers and to use human tools and eventually take over the world. A strong dose of dogmatism notwithstanding, Čapek's plays display an adroit touch and a strong narrative sensibility.

BUT ČAPEK'S DEDICATION to a political and moral educational program could not prevent a less socially engaged sensibility from emerging now and then, a sensibility more concerned with the work of art merely as the act of making something new. This is most notably manifest in the three novels that he published in the mid-1930s, *Hordubal*, *Meteor*, and *An Ordinary Life*, in which Čapek seems to have had so much fun with perspective and form that for a time he forgot to educate the nation. Each novel narrates the ultimate impossibility of a perfect, complete narration. A murdered man's killers are captured, but the life that led to his murder is utterly misunderstood; three people imagine the life of a pilot who falls from the sky, too injured to speak; a man considers all the people he might have been, or all the people he actually was. Only here does Čapek seem to tiptoe into the new world of modernism and into a sort of formal freedom and innovation, and only here does he really make good on the promise of his two early books of stories, *Wayside Crosses* (1917) and *Painful Tales* (1921).

In an essay called "Holmesiana, or On Detective Stories," Čapek wrote in 1924 that "as a special credential for this study, I will own that I myself once tried my hand at a volume of detective stories; I meant serious business, but when I had finished, a booklet called [*Wayside Crosses*] was the outcome, and I am sorry to say that no one recognized my detective stories as such. Obviously I hadn't set about it in the right way." He most certainly had not. Čapek's detective stories are mysteries with no solutions: the unknown remains unknown, beyond understanding, beyond explanation. *Wayside Crosses*, which had remained untranslated into English until Norma Comrada's fine work for Catbird Press (it appears together with *Painful Tales* in the volume *Cross Roads*), ignores the standard rules of detective fiction—and many of the rules of fiction that, in 1917, the literary world was only beginning to imagine that it could discard. Later in his career, in a collection published in English under the title *Tales from Two Pockets* (1928-1929), Čapek would get it right: the mysteries are solved, the explanations are simple, and there is almost always a clever twist that ties everything up at the end. But in these earlier stories he was willing to experiment, to cede his own authority, to confess bafflement. The stories in *Wayside Crosses* are a strange sort of revelation: they show the beginning of a career that never really happened.

That bafflement results in some wonderful fictions. Some of the mysteries are apparently supernatural: two men find a single footprint in the middle of a snowbank, with no rational explanation of its existence. Some are more mundane: a sick man discovers the word "Return" painted on the wall of his house and recognizes his own hand, but has no idea when he painted it and cannot figure out what he meant by it. These mysteries without solution are not necessarily expressions of despair, even with the first great war of the new age at full bore. Faced with absurdity and meaninglessness, many of Čapek's characters are often able to accept the lack of a planned, rational universe. In "The Footprint," this acceptance is made quite explicit, and boiled down as simply as Čapek will allow, as two strangers offer wilder and wilder explanations of how the solitary mark in the snow could have occurred:

> "It's disgraceful," said the other, "it's an incredibly stupid trick, but—Damn, there are such things as physical limits. It's completely impossible—Listen," he burst out, practically in anguish, "since there's only a single footprint here, couldn't it have been made by a man with only one leg? Don't laugh, I know it's idiotic, but there *must* be some sort of explanation. I mean, it's a matter of common sense, it's an assault on—I'm completely baffled. Either both of us are fools, or I'm asleep in my bed with a fever, or there *must* be a natural explanation."
>
> "Both of us are fools," Boura offered, as if having given it some thought. "We keep searching for a 'natural' explanation; we'll snatch at the most complicated, most nonsensical, most contrived cause, so long as it's 'natural.' But perhaps it would far simpler—and more natural—if we just said that it's a miracle. If we simply marveled at it and calmly went our ways—Without any confusion. Perhaps even content."

Or consider Čapek next to his most celebrated countryman and contemporary. Take this parable of Kafka's:

> Before the Law stands a doorkeeper. To this doorkeeper there comes a man from the country who begs for admittance to the Law. But the doorkeeper says that he cannot admit the man at the moment. The man, on reflection, asks if he will be allowed, then, to enter later. "It is possible," answers the doorkeeper, "but not at this moment."

The man waits for years with the doorkeeper outside the Law, growing old, until he is moments away from death, and he finds all his life condensed into a single question:

> "What do you want to know now?" asks the doorkeeper, "you are insatiable." "Everyone strives to attain the Law," answers the man, "how does it come about, then, that in all the years no one has come seeking admittance but me?" The doorkeeper perceives that the man is nearing his end and his hearing is failing, so he bellows in his ear: "No one but you could gain admittance through this door, since this door was intended for you. I am now going to shut it."

Kafka's is a world in which any sort of order is by nature paradoxical and confounding, made up of useless structure, substanceless form. Placed next to Kafka, Čapek's optimism seems almost boundless. In "The Waiting Room," two men waiting through the night for a morning train discuss their predicament:

> "Look, waiting is hard, it even breaks and humbles a god. You wait all year for some kind of luck, some great and beautiful event; finally it comes, rather trifling and gloomy, the way pain can be; but you say: yes, God, that's it, what I've waited for so many years for, in order to be redeemed!"

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"What do you mean?"

"I mean this: the only reward for waiting is the end of waiting; and yet it's worth the wait. That's why it's necessary to wait. It makes our belief make sense."

"What sort of belief?"

"Any sort at all," the man said, and he fell silent.

In the emptiness where Kafka sees a punitive pointlessness, Čapek's characters are often capable of filling up the hole with a vague hopefulness.

Painful Tales substitutes misery for mystery. Published four years after *Wayside Crosses*, Čapek's second collection of short stories concerns deceived husbands, mistreated employees, abused generosities. Čapek likes trying small variations on the same themes: a rich man realizes his wife is cheating on him, but he decides not to let her leave him because the man she loves is poor; a poor man's wife is cheating, but when she produces her lover's money, he agrees to look the other way. The result is almost bludgeoning: this is a book that will not relent in its insistence from all angles that human beings repeat their cruelties and their stupidities.

The stories here are told considerably more simply than those in *Wayside Crosses*. The earlier book contains echoes of the avant-garde of the time—a kinship with the Russian absurdist Daniil Kharms (1905-1942), for instance—as well as the avant-garde of the future: a bit of Borges here, a dash of Beckett there. But *Painful Tales* has a tenor and a tempo more akin to Chekhov. There are few instances of authorial intrusion, few philosophical conversations to flesh out what is happening in the narrative. Perhaps the closest Čapek comes to authorial intrusion is in "The Shirts." A man discovers that he is being robbed by his longtime housekeeper, who ignores the fact that she has been caught red-handed: "'How have I . . . deserved . . . this?' Johanka squeezed out the words. 'Instead of appreciation . . . As if I was a thief . . . It's shameful!'" Her employer begins to feel sorry for her:

> You see, he told himself, everyone has a weakness, but you can't offend anyone more than when you discover it. How incredibly, morally sensitive we are about our faults! And how painfully and brittly delicate we are about our crimes! Just put your finger on someone's secret vice, and you'll hear nothing but shrieks of pain and indignation! Don't you see that in judging an offender, you're judging someone who feels offended?

Are we more sinners than sinned against? The Czech title of *Wayside Crosses* translates literally as "God's Torment," but in that book God has had enough of tormenting, or, as the case may be, being tormented. God is absent, but there are hints of Him, clues that suggest that there is at least something beyond us—if not a divinity, then something frustrating and bewildering, but potentially wonderful. In *Painful Tales*, the inexplicable is simply the arbitrary pain and suffering that is human life, a suffering without point. Absurdity is transformed into futility. We are equally sinners and sinned against; but each is almost too much to bear.

To accompany the publication of *Cross Roads*, Catbird Press asked the respected Czech novelist Ivan Klíma for a book about Čapek. The result, *Karel Čapek—Life and Work*, was written specifically for an American audience, and it shows. Klíma is a good choice to do some explaining about Czech history and politics, but in this case he often seems to have confused Americans with twelve-year-olds. One chapter begins with the following observation: "Airplanes—symbols of the modern age, they took off into traditional skies and dropped non-traditional, thoroughly modern bombs." This level of profundity re-appears too often throughout the book, and is a general indication of the level of effort.

The editors who have allowed this sort of silliness to slip through have paid just about equal attention to style and language, seeing no reason to muck around with lazy writing and thinking. The structure of the book is confusing and badly organized, and the attempts to contextualize Čapek within history and Czech literature are spotty. There are stronger sections—Klíma is good on Čapek's love life, which rivals Kafka's for futility—but the book fails to achieve any sort of narrative momentum or cohesion. Čapek deserves better.

What, then, does he deserve? Of the three great Czechs born at the end of the nineteenth century—Čapek, Kafka, and Jaroslav Hašek, the anarchic creator of a single rambling, hilarious novel, *The Good Soldier Švejk*—Čapek has fared the least well. A reputation suffering next to Kafka's is nothing to complain about; but Kafka hardly represents Czech culture in the eyes of the world. Doubly alienated as a Jew who wrote in German, his genius is at once too specific and too universal to represent a nation. As it turns out, the persisting Czech cultural image of the first half of the century is not Čapek's robots, or newts, or torments: it is Švejk—the lone Czech soldier loyal to the Emperor Franz Josef in World War I, the bumbling icon of passive submission who manages to end up on top of things largely by virtue of being an officially designated imbecile—who is most easily recognized as the face of pre-Communist Czech culture. Čapek's place as a metonym for Czechoslovak literature, so firmly in hand during his lifetime, has been taken by a fool.

Thomas Mann called Čapek "the Czech dramatist who died of a broken heart when the democracies betrayed his country." Čapek deserves to be remembered as a brave and engaged intellectual who rarely erred from the political and moral path he saw as his responsibility; but he was also a writer. Not, perhaps, the writer he might have been—but it is possible that his posthumous demotion will do Čapek well enough. Stripped of the responsibility of standing for a country, the books can stand alone. Keep *Wayside Crosses* just down the shelf from Kafka, or Bruno Schulz; put *Painful Tales* near Chekhov or Babel. They may not equal the very best literature of the century, but they will not be out of place in its company. ■

CORRESPONDENCE

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macy and everything to do with his frightening incompetence.

David Harnden-Warwick
Bellingham, Washington

Red scare

To the editors:

I was angered at TNR's editors' endorsement of Harvard President Lawrence Summers's having it both ways ("Notebook," October 7). Summers says there is much to vigorously criticize in Israel's foreign and defense policies. Then he goes on to say that people who take advocacy positions based on their criticism have an anti-Semitic effect if not intent. I could scarcely believe the next statement of the TNR editors: "Why would anybody who is not anti-Semitic recoil from a speech against anti-Semitism?" I have quoted what is dangerously ingenuous and reminds me, unhappily, of McCarthyism: You don't like this speech against communism? Why, you must be a communist!

John McBride
Bettendorf, Indiana ■

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

Unconcern

ATTENTION IS DRAWN, AS he would say, to the dissent that William F. Buckley, Jr. has made against the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, specifically against its Bishops' Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs. At last his church has gone too far. It has renounced the mission to the Jews, and propounded that the attempt to convert the Jews is "no longer theologically acceptable", since the Jews, too, "abide in covenant with God". Buckley will have none of this decency. He hunted down the heterodoxy in a column last month, in which he endorsed the opinion of the coordinator of Jewish Ministries for the Southern Baptist Convention, who affectingly remarked about the abandonment of the Jews to Judaism that "there can be no more extreme form of anti-Semitism". With the same philo-Semitic compassion Buckley avers that "to say to a Jew that Christians are unconcerned about him is ... less an injunction to acknowledge the covenant of Israel than an act of condescension and indifference". It is as our friend that he asks us to let go of what we are. A missionary lunch at the Grill Room, perhaps?

BUCKLEY IS THE MOST DISTINGUISHED anti-anti-Semite in American Catholicism, and so his enthusiasm for the ancient grounds of anti-Semitism—for that was precisely the consequence for the Jews of the supersessionist theology of Paul—is startling. Even his language about anti-Semitism is suddenly warped. He writes of Pope John Paul II's critical attitude toward "that much of church history that tolerated and encouraged what we would now call anti-Semitism, considered, back then, evangelical ardor." In much the same way, I guess, as lynching was considered, back then, racial ardor. And what we would now call anti-Semitism was called much worse, back then—it was called, say, *contra perfidiam Judaeorum*. (I choose randomly from the vast Latin lexicon for this hatred.) An affirmation of the Christian mission to the Jews is a delegitimation of Jewish belief, and a delegitimation of Jewish belief is downright un-American, for it flies in the face of the pluralist revolution in religious life that is one of the glories of America.

I UNDERSTAND THAT THERE IS NO faith that does not insist upon its exclusive possession of the truth. Judaism, too, awaits the universal acknowledgment of the God of Judaism. But Judaism, which is not exactly "unconcerned" about the destiny of humankind, is content to wait. Impatience is the father of intolerance. I also understand that there are genuine conversions out of my faith and into your faith: spiritual motion can be brutal. For this reason I have never recoiled at the Catholic Church's canonization of Edith Stein. When she became Sister Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, she was no longer ours, even if her murder makes us grieve. So let us take religion seriously, but not stupidly. Buckley grounds his reluctance to let the Jews be Jews in Romans 10, commenting that "St. Paul ... used language that either means nothing at all, in which case nor does any biblical language, or else something beyond the reach of bishops to ignore, let alone undo." This is the sophistry of the settled perspective. For the meaning of biblical language is neither literal nor timeless, as all the great thinkers in all the great traditions recognized. Also, this Jew cheerfully recalls the account in Acts 13 of Paul's exasperating first mission to the Jews: "Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles". There is a column in that.

A FEW MONTHS AGO RICHARD JOHN Neuhaus alleged in *First Things* that I "make no secret of [my] contempt for Christianity". I know what he means. But my "contempt" for Christianity is only intellectual, and I may just as plausibly be accused of "contempt" for Judaism. Let me explain, even if I will certainly be misunderstood. I believe that religion is first and foremost a series of propositions about the universe that are true or false, and that the most pressing task for the mind in the realm of religion is to establish as best it can the truth or the falsity of those propositions. Theology is nothing without philosophy; or more precisely, it is a flight from difficult thinking, a romance of paradoxes, a wallowing in the coherence of a system of beliefs instead of a worrying about the veracity of a system of beliefs. First things, indeed. Now, I have established to my own satisfaction that the materialist analysis of existence is a colossal error, and so I call myself religious in the sense that I find myself on the side of immaterial meanings. (Rationalism has more in common with religion than it often cares to admit.) I can defend this notion of religion, but I am perfectly aware, and sometimes painfully aware, that it is a parched notion of religion, and that it falls far short of the notion of religion that the religions impart. I say painfully, because my loyalty to my own tradition, I mean my intellectual loyalty, is owed to my conviction that it is the most vast and most sophisticated exploration of immaterial meanings that I know; but many of the immaterial meanings that I find in my own tradition strike me as false, as fantasy, and so I cannot accept them. But I have never encountered an idea more unacceptable to my frail, sweating mind than the idea of the Incarnation, of the paternity of God, of the word made flesh. I have always been grateful that this philosophical absurdity is not my problem, that I may dismiss it without a tremor of treason.

SO IF I AM STIFF-NECKED IT IS BEcause I am stiff-brained. And I plead guilty to Neuhaus's charge in one further respect. There is one other stumblingstone. It is the Vatican. There is no place in my heart for it. This is not merely a reflex of collective memory, though I see no reason to forget the cruel and insulting history. As a Jew I do not have only my religion, I also have my honor. My honor makes me unconcerned, except politically, about the Vatican's view of the Jews. Let them keep their hallowed archives closed: if they are opened, I do not expect to learn that all those Jews are still alive and that Pius XII saved them. But there is also the larger question of the authority with which I wish to live. For I do not wish to live without authority, and I do not delude myself that I am myself all the authority that I need for my life; but there is no way, no way at all, ever, that the pope, this pope, any pope, can have spiritual authority for me. He is the leader of the Catholic Church and no more. He does not move me (except as a hero in the struggle against communism, but there were many heroes in that struggle). I rather resent the media's promotion of John Paul II into a teacher of all the world. He is not my teacher. Is this "contempt"? I think that it is a respect for real differences. One can be gracious about the reality of other beliefs even when one cannot be gracious about the content of other beliefs. The name of this graciousness is democracy. Anyway, who would not prefer this "contempt" to that "concern"?

LEON WIESELTIER

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A world of ideas on public policy.

Improving Access to Innovative Medicines

by Henry A. McKinnell, Jr., Ph.D.

Trends of the past few years have drawn a great deal of attention to the research-based pharmaceutical industry, both positive and negative. On the positive side, the discovery of breakthrough medicines is making it possible to effectively treat an ever-wider range of health conditions. Increasingly, the substitution of new therapies for less effective and more invasive treatments *reduces the cost of being healthy* to individuals, to healthcare systems, and to society. As a result of advances in pharmaceutical therapy, people have choices and opportunities for healthy living that were previously unavailable.

The increasing use of medicines, however, has also led to increasing concerns about the affordability of new treatments. The growth in *spending* on prescription drugs has often been mistaken for growth in prescription *prices*. For the most part, spending has risen not because of rising prices but because the quantity of medicines people use has increased substantially. Furthermore, as advances in science such as the decoding of the Human Genome lead to further discoveries, and as the world's population ages, pressure for even greater use of medicines is likely to continue. A key challenge of the future will be to assure continued progress in discovering treatments for disease, while at the same time assuring access to needed medicines.

As the world's leading pharmaceutical research company, Pfizer takes a serious interest in these issues. We are concerned for the uninsured and those who cannot afford the medicine they need. We believe that the affordability of medicines must be addressed in a way that will allow people access to needed medicines while at the same time maintaining the incentive to search for new and better treatments and cures. While these issues are appropriately addressed by society at large, we recognize that we have a role to play as well.

Pfizer believes that people who need medicines should be able to obtain them, and we believe that a variety of creative public policies and private approaches can improve access without stifling innovation

Pfizer has a strong tradition of providing our medicines to those with the greatest need. Our *Sharing the Care* and patient assistance programs provide our medicines at no charge to more than a million patients in the U.S. each year. Internationally, we are providing medicine, logistical support, medical expertise and training to address the critical healthcare needs of people in developing countries. And until a policy solution is enacted to address the need for improved coverage for seniors, we have established the *Pfizer for Living Share Card*, which is designed to help low-income U.S. Medicare beneficiaries who lack drug coverage. Patients in the U.S. whose income is at or below twice the federal poverty level may receive one-month prescriptions of most of Pfizer's medicines for only $15. Further information about this program can be obtained by calling, toll free, (800) 717-6005 or on the Internet at www.pfizerforliving.com. Although we recognize that this program does not provide a complete solution to the problem of inadequate coverage, we believe it is a promising model and we applaud other companies who have joined us in establishing similar programs.

Pfizer also has a history of introducing our valuable new medicines at reasonable prices and of implementing only modest annual price increases. Over the past decade, after accounting for discounts to federal government buyers and Medicaid, Pfizer's annual price increases in the United States have averaged less than the annual rate of inflation as measured by the Consumer Price Index. Furthermore, in our global pharmaceuticals business, price change has on average been responsible for only a 1.2% increase in our annual revenues over the past five years. Volume growth has been substantially larger, underscoring the fact that what we have seen in the past few years is an explosion in the use of valuable medicines rather than in their prices.

We believe that people who need medicines should be able to obtain them, and we believe that a variety of creative public policies and private approaches can *improve* access without *stifling* innovation. However, finding these solutions will require new thinking and new approaches. We are committed to participating not only in the search for cures, but also in the search for policy solutions on which the health of current and future generations depends.

Henry A. McKinnell, Jr., Ph.D. is chairman of the board and chief executive officer of Pfizer Inc.

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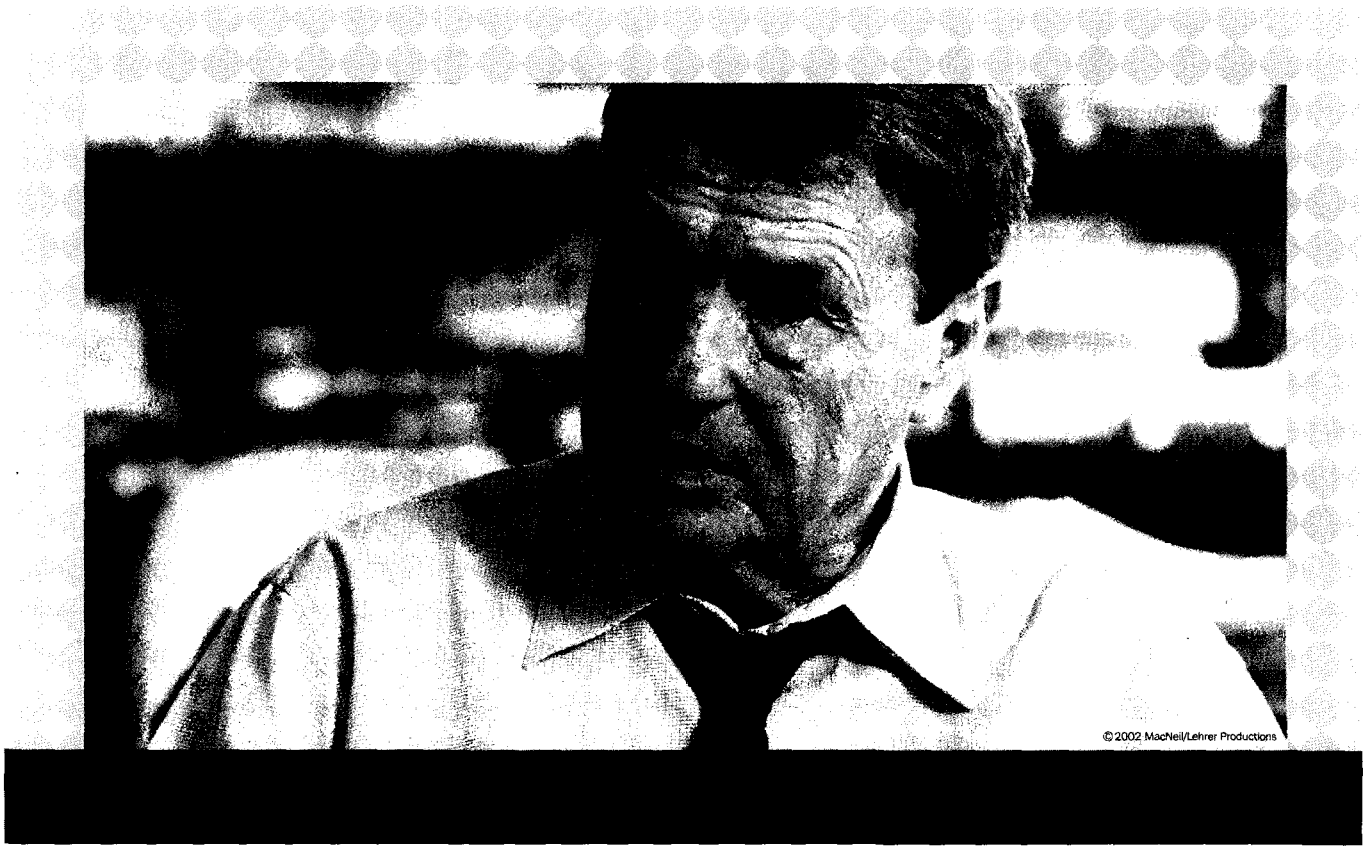

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